Ombudsman
ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

ANNUAL REPORT

2015 **2016**

Ombudsman
ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario

We are:

An independent office of the Legislature that resolves and investigates public complaints about Ontario government organizations and municipalities, universities and school boards. The Ombudsman recommends solutions to individual and systemic administrative problems.

Our Values:

Fair treatment
Accountable administration
Independent, impartial
Results: Achieving real change

Our Mission:

We strive to be an agent of positive change by promoting fairness, accountability and transparency in the public sector.

Our Vision:

A public sector that serves citizens in a way that is fair, accountable and transparent.

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
Bell Trinity Square
10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2C9

Telephone: 416-586-3300
Complaints line: 1-800-263-1830
Fax: 416-586-3485
TTY: 1-866-411-4211
Website: www.ombudsman.on.ca

@Ont_Ombudsman
Ontario Ombudsman
OntarioOmbudsman

Ombudsman
ONTARIO
ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

November 2, 2016

The Honourable Dave Levac
Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Province of Ontario
Queen's Park

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to submit my Annual Report for the period of April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, pursuant to section 11 of the *Ombudsman Act*, so that you may table it before the Legislative Assembly.

Sincerely,

Paul Dubé
Ombudsman

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
Bell Trinity Square
10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2C9

Telephone: 416-586-3300
Complaints line: 1-800-263-1830
Fax: 416-586-3485
TTY: 1-866-411-4211

Website: www.ombudsman.on.ca

Table of Contents

OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE **5**

ABOUT OUR OFFICE **9**

WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN? 9
VALUES, MISSION AND VISION 9
WHO WE ARE: MANAGEMENT AND TEAMS 10
WHAT WE DO 11

ABOUT THIS REPORT **13**

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS **14**

YEAR IN REVIEW – CASES BY TOPIC **16**

LAW & ORDER 16
SOCIAL SERVICES 21
EDUCATION – PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND PROGRAMS 26
EDUCATION – SCHOOL BOARDS 29
EDUCATION – UNIVERSITIES 34
MUNICIPALITIES – GENERAL 37
MUNICIPALITIES – CLOSED MEETINGS 42
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT 45
EMPLOYMENT 47
HEALTH 49
TRANSPORTATION 52
MONEY & PROPERTY 55
CERTIFICATES & PERMITS 57

APPENDIX – CASE STATISTICS **58**

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED, FISCAL YEARS 2011-2012 TO 2015-2016 58
HOW CASES WERE RECEIVED, 2015-2016 58
CASES BY PROVINCIAL RIDING, 2015-2016 60
TOP 15 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS BY CASE VOLUME, 2015-2016 61
TOP 10 CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES BY CASE VOLUME, 2015-2016 61
CASES RECEIVED FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND SELECTED PROGRAMS, 2015-2016 62
CASES RECEIVED ABOUT SCHOOL BOARDS, SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 - MARCH 31, 2016 64
CASES RECEIVED ABOUT COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, 2015-2016 65
CASES RECEIVED ABOUT UNIVERSITIES, JANUARY 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2016 65
CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNCIPALITIES, JANUARY 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2016 66
CASES RECEIVED ABOUT CLOSED MUNICIPAL MEETINGS, SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 - MARCH 31, 2016 68
FINANCIAL SUMMARY 68

www.ombudsman.on.ca

Ombudsman's Message

EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS

It is an honour and a privilege for me to serve as Ontario's seventh Ombudsman. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to lead such a remarkable team; one I have long held in high esteem. Collectively, we are dedicated to serving the people of Ontario and passionate about our role in enhancing governance and promoting administrative fairness.

I am particularly pleased to present this report on behalf of the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario at such a significant time in its history. For the first time since our doors opened in 1975, we are reporting on our new oversight of Ontario municipalities, universities and school boards – as well as the hundreds of provincial government bodies that have always been within our mandate.

My term began on April 1, 2016 – one day after the close of the fiscal year covered by this report. Of necessity, we made the decision to report on this extraordinary year at an extraordinary time, in autumn instead of spring. This allowed us not only to issue reports on two major systemic investigations in the interim, but also to focus our efforts on working and building relationships with stakeholders – especially in our new areas of jurisdiction.

New challenges

The *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014* (also known as "Bill 8") ushered in changes to our jurisdiction that took effect in September 2015 and January 2016. This meant the number of organizations we oversee doubled in the past year – from 500-plus to more than 1,000 – presenting both an enormous opportunity and an enormous challenge.

The opportunity was that millions of Ontarians now had access to their Ombudsman for help in areas that were previously beyond our scrutiny. The challenge was that many – including many stakeholders in those areas – were unfamiliar with our role and function and, as a result, somewhat apprehensive about our new mandate.

We are committed to engaging and educating the public and other stakeholders about who we are and how we work. The learning curve bends both ways: Our team is working tirelessly to get to know municipalities, universities and school boards, and making sure they get to know and understand us.

To aid in this process, our Office partnered with Canada's Public Policy Forum to convene a series of roundtables in six cities around the province, as well as a one-day conference in Toronto, with representatives from the school board and municipal sectors. Our Office also hosted a symposium for university ombudsmen – and staff literally criss-crossed Ontario to speak to stakeholders in more than 50 outreach events in fiscal 2015-2016 alone.

Photo by Matthew Pearce Photography

▲ Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé

◀ February 25, 2016: Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay (front, right) with Public Policy Forum partners and guests at stakeholder symposium on Ombudsman's new jurisdiction, including (front row, from centre) Quebec Ombudsman Raymonde Saint-Germain, New Brunswick Ombudsman Charles Murray, Ottawa City Clerk and Solicitor Rick O'Connor, (back row, from right) former Toronto District School Board counsel Tony Brown and Steve Orsini, Secretary of the Cabinet and head of the Ontario Public Service.

We have incorporated the feedback from those initial events and have continued our outreach efforts in recent months. One of my first tasks as Ombudsman was to introduce an information webinar for school boards and municipalities on dealing with our Office, and I have since had the chance to speak to and attend numerous conferences and events in these sectors, as well as to reach out to provincial stakeholders – including elected officials, associations and interest groups.

My team and I see firsthand the value of building these relationships in our daily work, because they enable us to be more effective. This experience has also underlined, for all of us, the importance of ensuring that who we are and what we do is clear to all Ontarians. As our oversight role expands, we must ensure that stakeholders understand the value we can add by fostering productive and appropriate relationships with all.

New look

We have reorganized the structure of our Annual Report with that in mind, starting with the basics about our Office. One of the projects we undertook within my first six weeks in office was to develop a clear statement of what our office stands for and how we seek to accomplish our goals. To that end, we developed new Vision, Mission and Values statements and long-range plans based on input from all our units.

The rest of the report is arranged by topic, rather than by organization – the better to assist anyone who might be wondering: "What can the Ombudsman do for me?"

Throughout the stories and topics presented here, what shines through is the wide variety of ways in which we have answered that question.

Every day, we help people get the information or assistance they require in dealing with public sector bodies. Our involvement often results in those bodies changing course or taking appropriate action to provide the services or benefits citizens are entitled to. Of course, we sometimes find that complaints are without merit and end up validating the work done by public servants.

Although resolving individual complaints is what we do on a daily basis – and we received **22,118** in 2015-2016 – this report demonstrates that our work often goes well beyond that. As an oversight office uniquely positioned to receive and analyze information about issues that matter to the people of Ontario, we add tremendous value by sharing our observations and commenting on what we have learned.

For example, we recently made four constructive and well-received submissions recommending improvements to provincial legislation (two prior to my appointment, two since), regarding police "carding" procedures, oversight of municipalities, the use of segregation in the province's jails, and oversight of police.

Our two new in-depth, systemic investigation reports – *A Matter of Life and Death* and *Nowhere to Turn* – will bring long-awaited and much needed positive changes to police de-escalation training and services for adults with developmental disabilities, respectively. In both cases, after some initial resistance from government, we were able to persuade the respective ministers and their deputies to accept our recommendations and commit to implementing them in a timely fashion. In total, all 82 of our recommendations were accepted, many of which have the potential to save lives.

"I look forward to building on this foundation over the next five years. I am committed to making this Office more effective than ever as an agent of positive change, by working with stakeholders, diligently investigating complaints and systemic issues, and vigorously promoting fairness and good governance."

Ombudsman Paul Dubé

▲ June 29, 2016: Ombudsman Paul Dubé releases report on police de-escalation training, *A Matter of Life and Death*, at Ontario Legislature.

◀ May 4, 2016: Ombudsman Paul Dubé with Speaker Dave Levac (centre) and Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay at meet-and-greet event at Ontario Legislature.

As well, our senior managers meet regularly with top officials at the organizations that tend to attract the most complaints, to provide feedback on persistent trends – and this report contains several examples of how this approach rooted out and averted potential systemic problems.

As an Ombudsman, my approach is collaborative, and I am pleased to have the chance to build on this Office's strong tradition of training and consultation with other administrative watchdogs. For example, our colleagues who also have new responsibilities under Bill 8 – the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and the new Patient Ombudsman – consulted with us on investigator training, as did the new Hydro One Ombudsman.

New relationships

It is an exciting time to be at Ombudsman Ontario as we chart our course into new waters. We are expanding our horizons and our team, while maintaining our standards of excellence. We are building relationships to enhance the trust and credibility stakeholders have in the Office, which will help us solve even more problems and enhance governance for the people we all serve.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that this report and the results in it would not have been achieved without the signal work of my two predecessors. André Marin, who served as Ombudsman from April 2005 to September 2015, built a remarkable team, and together they made this one of the best known and respected offices of its kind in the world. He was instrumental in the first expansion of this Office's oversight in 40 years, and that will benefit all Ontarians.

And I am particularly indebted to Barbara Finlay, whose leadership as Acting Ombudsman during the rollout of our new jurisdiction ensured its success, and whose expertise and guidance as Deputy Ombudsman continues to keep this Office on course.

I look forward to building on this foundation over the next five years. I am committed to making this Office more effective than ever as an agent of positive change, by working with stakeholders, diligently investigating complaints and systemic issues, and vigorously promoting fairness and good governance.

> "As an oversight office uniquely positioned to receive and analyze information about issues that matter to the people of Ontario, we add tremendous value by sharing our observations and commenting on what we have learned."
>
> *Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé*

About Our Office

WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN?

An ombudsman is an independent and impartial officer who raises citizens' concerns with government bodies. The first parliamentary ombudsman was established in Sweden in 1809, which is where the term "ombudsman" originated – it means "citizen's representative" and is considered to be gender-neutral.

Issues tackled by an ombudsman typically involve matters that could not be resolved within the government body. An ombudsman reviews issues impartially – not acting on behalf of either party. If a person's complaint has merit, the ombudsman first seeks to resolve the dispute at the lowest level possible.

When necessary, the ombudsman conducts an investigation, based on an impartial assessment of the facts and evidence.

Many complaints about public sector bodies are due less to a one-time error or misjudgment, and more to an underlying issue that will cause the problem to recur if not corrected. If we only resolved individual complaints in isolation, without looking at the policies and procedures that gave rise to them, we would miss the opportunity to identify problems that may affect many more stakeholders. So, in addition to dealing with individual concerns and complaints, an ombudsman also examines systemic issues with a view to correcting problems that negatively affect large numbers of citizens.

By compiling irrefutable evidence, telling compelling stories, and making reasonable recommendations for corrective action, the ombudsman seeks to persuade public sector bodies to do the right thing.

What is the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario?

- An independent office of the Legislature, established in 1975, that resolves and investigates public complaints about Ontario government organizations and municipalities, universities and school boards.
- An office of last resort that can recommend constructive solutions to individual and systemic problems where existing avenues of complaint and appeal have been exhausted or cannot reach.
- An impartial fact-finder that does not advocate for complainants or public sector bodies, but for fairness, accountability and transparency.

Ombudsman
ONTARIO
ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

Values, Mission and Vision

Our Values

Fair treatment
Accountable administration
Independent, impartial
Results: Achieving real change

Our Mission

We strive to be an agent of positive change by promoting fairness, accountability and transparency in the public sector.

Our Vision

A public sector that serves citizens in a way that is fair, accountable and transparent.

WHO WE ARE: Management and teams

Ombudsman

Paul Dubé

Deputy Ombudsman

Barbara Finlay

Early Resolutions Team	Frontline complaint intake, triage, information, referrals and general complaint resolutions	Director	Eva Kalisz Rolfe
Investigations Team	Individual investigations, proactive work, complex complaint resolutions, identification of systemic issues	Director	Sue Haslam
Special Ombudsman Response Team	Systemic issue investigations, extensive field work, follow-up	Director	Gareth Jones
Legal Services	Legal support, evidence analysis, report preparation **Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team**: Municipal closed meeting investigations and reports	General Counsel	Laura Pettigrew
		General Counsel	Wendy Ray
Communications Team	Reports and publications, website, media relations, social media, video, presentations and outreach activities	Director	Linda Williamson
Corporate Services	Financial services, human resources, administration, information technology	Director	Scott Miller

WHAT WE DO

> I don't know where I would be without the help you have given to me. The staff are all so fantastic, great job. Thank you very much.
>
> *Comment from complainant, received via Facebook*

Conduct independent, impartial oversight of Ontario government and broader public sector bodies (municipalities, universities and school boards).

Address confidential public complaints about public sector bodies through quick, informal resolution, free of any charge to the complainant or organization.

Assist Ontarians in navigating provincial and broader public sector bureaucracy by pointing them in the right direction.

Assist Members of Provincial Parliament by reviewing constituent concerns they refer to our Office.

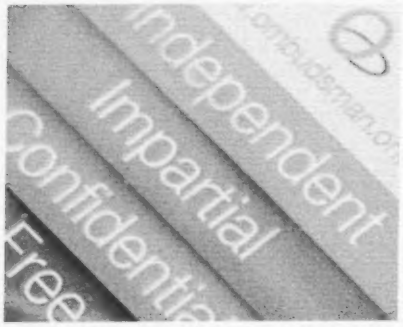
Investigate individual cases as warranted, after first seeking to resolve them at the lowest possible level.

Raise issues that are in the public interest with public sector officials, with or without a complaint, including providing input to government consultations.

Track trending issues and flag them proactively with public sector officials in an effort to avert future complaints.

Conduct in-depth investigations into broad, systemic issues affecting large numbers of people.

Act as the closed meeting investigator for all Ontario municipalities that have not appointed their own; issuing findings and recommending best practices to facilitate compliance with the *Municipal Act, 2001*.



Issue reports annually and on investigations as warranted.

Recommend constructive change to address problems and improve public services.

Follow up on all accepted recommendations to ensure they are implemented and have the desired effect.

HOW WE WORK

Our process for dealing with complaints and inquiries

1 Intake and information gathering

Is the matter outside of our jurisdiction?

Is there an existing mechanism that should be tried first?

Yes: We will refer the matter accordingly.

No: We may pursue it further. The Ombudsman also has the discretion to dismiss complaints that are considered to be frivolous or vexatious, or for other reasons.

2 Resolution

Can the matter be resolved?

Yes: We will make the necessary contacts to facilitate communication.

No: We may conduct an investigation.

3 Investigation

Can the matter be resolved through more contact with the organization?

Yes: No investigation is necessary.

No: We may provide the organization in question with formal notice of investigation and then conduct interviews, request documents, and gather evidence as warranted.

4 Systemic investigation

Is the problem part of a recurring trend or increase in complaints?

Does it have the potential to affect large numbers of people?

Yes: We may flag the trend proactively, to alert officials to the problem so it can be nipped in the bud.

Or we may provide the organization with formal notice of a systemic investigation.

Even without receiving a complaint, the Ombudsman can launch an "own motion" investigation into a matter of public interest.

5 Evidence gathering

Our formal investigations, particularly those relating to systemic issues, can involve extensive interviews with relevant stakeholders, review of documentation, and research of similar issues in other jurisdictions.

6 Public reporting

Based on the evidence gathered, the Ombudsman may publish findings and recommendations, but not all investigations result in published reports. Results of our work are also shared in our Annual Reports, monthly e-newsletters, other publications and public presentations.

7 Follow-up

We follow up on all recommendations that are accepted, to ensure they are implemented and have the desired effect.

About This Report

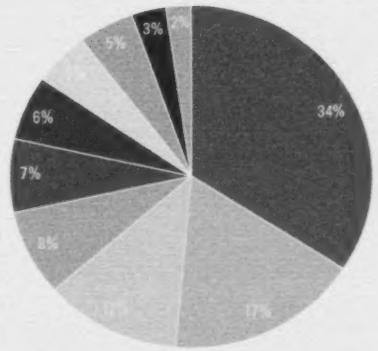
With the historic expansion of the Ombudsman's mandate this past year, our Office now oversees more than 1,000 public sector bodies. To better highlight and explain our work in this wide variety of areas, we have organized our Annual Report according to the general topics addressed, rather than by government ministry or agency, or by type of investigation.

These topics correspond to the topic search categories on our website, which can be used to find information about our work in any of these areas. In this report, we have arranged them generally according to case volume – with the areas that we heard about most (e.g., correctional facilities, social services and education) appearing first.

More detailed breakdowns of complaints – by ministry, program, municipality, school board, provincial riding, etc. – can be found in the charts in the Appendix to this report, and on our website.

Look for "Good to Know" boxes throughout this report for other explanatory notes.

CASES BY TOPIC AREA



- LAW & ORDER
- SOCIAL SERVICES
- EDUCATION SECTOR (INCLUDES SCHOOL BOARDS, UNIVERSITIES AND PROVINCIAL MINISTRIES)
- MUNICIPALITIES
- ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
- EMPLOYMENT
- HEALTH
- TRANSPORTATION
- MONEY & PROPERTY
- CERTIFICATES & PERMITS

Good to KNOW

Provincial statistics in this report cover the past fiscal year – April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016. The **text** of this report also refers to notable developments in the interim while it was being finalized.

Statistics for cases about **school boards** cover the period from September 1, 2015 (when our jurisdiction took effect) to March 31, 2016.

Statistics for cases about **municipalities** and **universities** cover the period from January 1, 2016 (when our jurisdiction took effect) to March 31, 2016.

CASES BY TYPE

What do people complain about when they come to the Ombudsman? **Here are the top 10 types of cases received in fiscal 2015-2016.**

1. Service delivery
2. Administrative decisions
3. Communication
4. Delays
5. Legislation and/or regulations
6. Enforcement of rules or policies
7. Broader public policy matters
8. Procedures
9. Funding
10. Internal complaint processes

Report Highlights

22,118
cases received
in fiscal 2015-2016

51%
closed within one week

62%
closed within two weeks

30%
received online

63%
received by phone

Top 5
provincial organizations by case volume
in fiscal 2015-2016

1. **1,025** Family Responsibility Office
2. 843 Ontario Disability Support Program
3. 647 Central East Correctional Centre
4. 632 Hydro One
5. 594 Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

New jurisdiction

Municipalities	School boards	Universities
918 cases received	**398** cases received	**92** cases received
(January 1 - March 31, 2016)	(September 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016)	(January 1 - March 31, 2016)

Outreach
with stakeholders

50+
outreach events
in fiscal 2015-2016

Roundtables
in
6 cities

Communications

2,391
news articles published
in fiscal 2015-2016

Ad value:
$2.8
million

Aggregate audience
77.4
million people

589
broadcast media stories
in fiscal 2015-2016

7.5
million
Twitter impressions

8,759
YouTube views

Facebook reach:
544,000
people

161,823
website visitors

782,040
pageviews

Systemic
investigation reports

2 reports issued

A Matter of Life and Death – June 2016
22 recommendations

Nowhere to Turn – August 2016
60 recommendations

Recommendations accepted:
82

Year In Review

CASES BY TOPIC

LAW & ORDER

Overview and trends in cases

Complaints relating to correctional services, policing and the provincial justice system consistently account for the largest proportion of cases handled by our Office. Correctional facilities alone were the subject of **4,051** complaints, and as usual, we flagged those involving serious issues of health and safety as warranted. Other common areas of complaint relating to the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services are, of course, policing and matters involving the courts and legal aid.

Policing issues

Our Office oversees the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, which is responsible for police services and training across the province. We also oversee some administrative aspects of the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) – the civilian agency that investigates all police-involved deaths and serious injuries, through the Ministry of the Attorney General.

However, the Ombudsman has no oversight of individual police services, although we received **284** complaints about them this past year. Nor does our new mandate over municipalities as of January 1, 2016, include municipal police services boards. The body that oversees police conduct, policy and services (including the OPP) is the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD), and we routinely refer complaints about police there. We do not oversee the OIPRD, although we received **35** complaints about it in 2015-2016.

Street checks ("carding") – Ombudsman submission to Ministry

Amid strong public controversy over the police practice of street checks – popularly known as "carding" – the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services conducted a series of consultations and town hall meetings and invited submissions on the topic. Our Office's submission, made in August 2015, contained 25 recommendations to regulate or restrict carding.

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. **4,051** Correctional facilities
2. **284** Municipal police (outside jurisdiction)
3. **118** Legal Aid Ontario
4. **110** Ontario Provincial Police
5. **41** Probation and Parole

These recommendations include: Cautioning everyone who is "carded" that they have the right to walk away; provincewide training for officers to ensure consistent practices; more research into the effectiveness of carding and consultation with human rights experts on the harm it causes; strict limits on the use of street checks and retention of any data gathered; independent oversight; and no carding of anyone under 18.

In March 2016, the government announced new regulations that are consistent with several of these recommendations, slated to come into effect on January 1, 2017.

Police oversight – Ombudsman submission to independent review

In addition to its consultations on carding, the government launched public consultations on reforms to the *Police Services Act* in early 2016. In April 2016, it also announced an independent review of the province's three police oversight agencies, the OIPRD, SIU and the Ontario Civilian Police Commission. The review is headed by Ontario Court of Appeal Justice Michael Tulloch, whose final report is due in March 2017.

Our Office has previously recommended changes to the Act to strengthen the Special Investigations Unit, in our two investigative reports on the SIU, *Oversight Unseen* (2008), and *Oversight Undermined* (2011). The Ombudsman met with Justice Tulloch in October 2016 and provided him with our submission and recommendations to strengthen and improve police oversight.

Correctional facilities

As with all cases we receive, we seek to resolve complaints about correctional facilities at the lowest level possible – and many complaints are best handled within the institution. Our Office flags matters of health and safety for urgent attention, intervening when warranted, and our staff meet regularly with senior officials in the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to alert them to potential systemic problems.

Our focus is on concerns that have the biggest impact on the wellbeing of those in custody – for example, prolonged segregation placements, problems with accessing medical care, lockdowns, and assaults.

Segregation – Ombudsman submission to Ministry

In April 2016, as part of its review of the use of segregation (also known as solitary confinement) in correctional facilities, the Ministry conducted consultations on the practice. As with carding, our Office made a submission to the Ministry that included 28 recommendations, beginning with the abolition of indefinite segregation. Other recommendations call for the creation of an independent panel to review all segregation placements and limiting them by law to 15 days, as the United Nations has declared anything longer to be cruel, inhuman treatment.

The submission was based on our Office's extensive experience in dealing with complaints about segregation – including **186** in 2015-2016. It highlighted the recent case of a man who spent more than two years in segregation in several different facilities, and who was prescribed anti-depressant medication to help him deal with the isolation. After our Office made inquiries on his case, correctional officials released him from segregation, drew up a care plan for him and involved him in an educational program.

In another case, an inmate complained that he had been in segregation for three months continuously, and off and on for a total of nine months. He said he was struggling to eat and sleep and felt he was losing his mind. Our inquiries determined that the most recent placement was for his protection because of fighting with other inmates, but jail staff had failed to provide the Ministry with the required reporting. The man was seen by a psychiatrist, released from segregation after 100 days, and was able to interact with other inmates in the general population.

> "Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé is right to call for a ban on the long-term solitary confinement of prison inmates.... Dubé presents a strong case – one the province should immediately act upon."
>
> Toronto Star *editorial, May 12, 2016*

Medical issues

More than half of the complaints we receive from those in custody – some **2,500** in 2015-2016 – relate to problems with health care. These include a lack of access to particular medications, or to medical staff and treatment.

For example, a woman who was in custody awaiting trial, whose numerous health conditions included suffering from seizures and using a wheelchair for mobility, complained to us after she had a seizure while bathing and broke bones in her foot. She told us that she spent hours on the bathroom floor in pain before she was found and treated. After our Office intervened, she was referred for an assessment of her seizures, although this was still not acted upon until we followed up on it.

One inmate complained that he was forcibly transferred from one jail to another, despite doctor's orders that he not be moved. When he asserted his rights and refused the transfer, correctional staff put him in segregation for several hours. A team of staff then removed him by force and transferred him to the new institution. When Ombudsman staff looked into the case, management at the first jail acknowledged they had missed the clear "not fit for transfer" restriction on the man's file, and reminded nursing staff to review all medical files before scheduling inmates for transfer.

Lockdowns

A lockdown involves all inmates in a unit – or an entire facility – being confined to their cells all day, or longer. During lockdowns, inmates are generally unable to use common areas, phones or showers, participate in activity programs or receive visitors. Lockdowns are commonly the result of staff shortages, and were frequent during a labour dispute in 2015 involving unionized correctional officers (settled in early 2016).

We received **300** complaints about lockdowns in 2015-2016, many involving inmates being denied visits or the ability to contact a lawyer. In our meetings with senior Ministry officials, we were told the long-term solution is hiring more staff (some 2,000 new officers are to be hired over the next three years). We continue to monitor the use of lockdowns and their impact.

Inmate-on-inmate assaults

Our Office continues to monitor complaints about inmate-on-inmate attacks – **52** in 2015-2016 – in light of the Ministry's direction that correctional facilities are not required to conduct formal investigations of such cases. We were told a new policy is in the works that will require serious assaults to be reported in writing to a superintendent.

Toronto South Detention Centre

Issues with this Toronto "superjail" that we identified in 2014-2015 – including an infirmary that could not open because of lack of staff, and sick prisoners being held in segregation cells – have been addressed. However, in late 2015, we noted several complaints about the administration of insulin to inmates with diabetes. Inmates were being given insulin after meals, sometimes late, contributing to dangerous fluctuations in their blood glucose levels. We were told labour issues and staff shortages contributed to this problem, and we continue to monitor it.

Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC)

In March 2016, in the wake of news reports about inmates being housed in showers, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services announced a task force to examine issues of overcrowding and other health and safety concerns at this jail, which has consistently been one of the most complained-about in the province (**394** complaints in 2015-2016).

Our Office made a submission to this task force, noting concerns we have raised about overcrowding and health and safety issues, as well as the fact that the OCDC is the only one of the five most complained-about

TOP 5 CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES BY CASE VOLUME

correctional facilities with a capacity of less than 1,000 inmates. The bulk of complaints from OCDC were about health care issues, but there were also **27** about segregation and **26** about living conditions – including one from an inmate who was housed in a shower for several days in March 2016.

In June 2016, the task force released its report, recommending numerous improvements to conditions at the jail as well as broader changes to the remand system. Our Office is monitoring the response to these recommendations closely.

Investigations

Systemic investigation: Police de-escalation training

Report: *A Matter of Life and Death*, released June 2016

Investigation update: Launched in the wake of the fatal police shooting of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim on a Toronto streetcar in the summer of 2013, this investigation focused on the province's role in training police to handle conflict situations involving persons who are in crisis, e.g., due to mental illness or drugs. The investigation also reviewed hundreds of recommendations from coroners' inquests into similar police-involved deaths, dating back two decades, and other studies, including one prepared by Hon. Frank Iacobucci for Toronto Police in response to the Yatim case.

With the help of two retired police chiefs, our investigators compared training and use-of-force models from around the world with those provided to police in Ontario.

A consistent theme throughout all of these was that police should be better trained to de-escalate such situations so they do not end up using their firearms. Since the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is responsible for police training through the Ontario Police College, as well as the models all police use to determine when to use force, the Ombudsman's investigation focused on the Ministry's role in ensuring police are better trained and equipped.

Based on 95 interviews with policing experts in Ontario and elsewhere, as well as family members of people killed by police, the Ombudsman made **22** recommendations, starting with a call for the Ministry to direct that de-escalation techniques be used before force whenever public and officer safety allow. He also recommended that the Ministry introduce a new regulation setting out guidelines on de-escalation for all police services, as well as a new use-of-force model – and that that this be completed by June 2017.

The Ministry had two opportunities to respond to a draft of this report before it was finalized. Although it initially promised only more discussion and review, the newly appointed Minister, David Orazietti, met with the Ombudsman the day before the report was released and committed to accepting all of the recommendations.

Systemic investigation: Use of force by correctional staff

Report: *The Code*, released June 2013

Investigation update: All **45** of the Ombudsman's recommendations to end the "code of silence" among correctional officers in cases of excessive force used against inmates were accepted by the Ministry in 2013, and as of this year, it has implemented 38 of them.

Remaining recommendations include installing closed-circuit video in all

> "I would like to thank the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman for their report and thorough recommendations concerning the de-escalation of conflict solutions in Ontario. We accept today's report and recommendations and will report back regularly on our progress. I am committed to addressing all the recommendations."
>
> *Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister David Orazietti, June 29, 2016*

> The Ombudsman's report [*A Matter of Life and Death*] is an eloquent plea for systemic and individual responsibility. His report is too important to be left to wither on a shelf beside earlier, similar reports and coroners' recommendations. It should be read by every police chief, every journalist, every judge. And by every police officer.
>
> *Michael Enright, CBC* Sunday Edition, *September 25, 2016*

correctional facilities (four institutions have yet to do so, but this is expected to be completed in the next few years), and universal use of hand-held video recording in situations where correctional officers may potentially use force on inmates.

The number of complaints to our Office about correctional staff using excessive force on inmates has decreased – to **43** this past year, from 79 in 2014-2015 (in the four years prior to the investigation, we received more than 350 such complaints). We also received some complaints about lengthy delays in the process for investigating and documenting use-of-force incidents, which was implemented as a result of our investigation. We continue to monitor this issue.

Systemic investigation: Operational stress injury and suicide affecting Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and police across the province

Report: *In the Line of Duty*, released October 2012

Investigation update: Remarkable progress to help active and retired officers in dealing with operational stress injury and suicide has been made since the release of this report, which made **28** recommendations to the OPP and **6** to the Ministry. These included that the OPP implement training and education programs, collect data on rates of operational stress injuries and incidents of work-related suicides, and address cultural issues and stigma. The report also called on the Ministry to survey police needs across the province and develop provincial standards for police services to address these issues.

Over the past few years, the OPP has allotted significant resources to this issue, including creating a Wellness Unit and ensuring support for members, retirees and their families.

In December 2015, the OPP and Ministry announced a new integrated mental health strategy, which includes increased capacity for OPP critical incident stress response, early intervention and referrals, as well as health care resources. The OPP Commissioner acknowledged during the announcement that the strategy is based in part on the recommendations in the *In the Line Of Duty* report. The OPP is also sharing its approach with other police services and emergency service providers across Canada.

Case summaries

Best defence

A senior who was charged with threatening police complained that Legal Aid Ontario told him he was no longer eligible for their services after the Crown decided it would not seek to put him in jail if convicted. Our Office determined that although Legal Aid eligibility normally involves cases where there is a likelihood of jail time, Legal Aid can also provide a lawyer for vulnerable people in difficult circumstances. The man appealed Legal Aid's decision and he was given legal representation.

Justice delayed

An inmate complained that he had sat in jail for days after becoming eligible for parole because a parole hearing had not been scheduled for him. He had signed a consent form to delay his hearing past his parole eligibility date, but said he had only done so because he was told the Parole Board was not available sooner. As a result of this case, the Parole Board eliminated the consent form, to ensure that hearings are held before an inmate's eligibility date, as required by law.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Overview and trends in cases

The general area of "social services" falls mostly within the purview of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and includes the two most consistently complained about provincial bodies: The Family Responsibility Office and the Ontario Disability Support Program, both of which serve millions of Ontarians. We received **2,105** complaints relating to this ministry, which also includes a range of developmental services offices and programs, which were the subject of our largest investigative report this year.

We also received **46** complaints about social services relating to children and youth, within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Our jurisdiction in this area does not include children's aid societies, although we consistently receive complaints about them (4,555 between 2005 and 2015). We received **417** complaints about children's aid societies in fiscal 2015-2016; as in previous years, we had to turn these away, but did our best to refer people to help as warranted.

However, as of March 1, 2016, thanks to Bill 8, the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth – who, like the Ombudsman, is an independent Officer of the Legislature – now has the power to conduct individual and systemic investigations relating to children's aid societies, bringing them under independent scrutiny for the first time.

Family Responsibility Office

The Family Responsibility Office (FRO) is responsible for enforcing court-ordered child and spousal support and is consistently a top source of complaints to the Ombudsman. This year, we received **1,025** complaints about the FRO, making it once again the most complained about Ontario government organization.

We take a proactive approach to FRO complaints, meeting regularly with senior FRO officials to address trends and specific cases. One trend we noticed this year involved inconsistencies in FRO's enforcement actions – that is, it sometimes acted too aggressively, and sometimes was not aggressive enough. For example, in one case, FRO officials failed to take additional enforcement action for several years against a man who owed more than **$300,000** in arrears. Yet in other cases, they pursued people whose support obligations were met, like one man whose salary was garnished by 50%, even though he had actually overpaid the FRO (after our intervention, FRO officials refunded him **$450** and apologized).

Errors and poor customer service were also common complaints about the FRO. An MPP brought a complaint to us on behalf of a man who disagreed with the FRO's interpretation of a court order. FRO officials apologized to him after our staff made inquiries and discovered accounting errors that had wrongly increased his arrears by more than **$18,000**. However, more recently, new leadership at the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister levels seems to be driving positive change at the FRO. It has kept our Office informed of its improvement efforts, including development of a client service

complaints process and a "client service charter" that will set out a feedback process and service standards.

We continue to monitor other initiatives introduced last year to improve the handling of files and, in particular, the organization of the FRO's Interjurisdictional Support Orders unit. This unit, the subject of **58** complaints this year, works with agencies in other provinces or countries to enforce support orders where one of the parties lives outside of Ontario.

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Ombudsman staff also meet regularly with Ministry officials to flag trends about the ODSP, consistently a top source of complaints to our Office – **843** this year. Complaints generally tend to relate to customer service – many clients with disabilities complain about issues in communicating with ODSP officials – and the level of funding provided.

This year, we continued to monitor the Ministry's progress in addressing problems with the computer system it launched in late 2014, known as "SAMS" (Social Assistance Management System). One man complained to us that the only answer he could get from ODSP workers after waiting five months to receive his benefits was "be patient." Our staff discovered that the man's file was affected by a SAMS glitch, but it was fixed the next day, and two days after we contacted the ODSP, the man's case worker met with him and provided him with a retroactive benefit payment.

Developmental services

The province's complex and changing system of programs and services for people with developmental disabilities continues to be a top source of complaints (**156** this year). It has also been the subject of two systemic investigations by our Office. We continue to work with affected individuals and the relevant officials to resolve individual cases and flag potential systemic problem in this area.

Autism services for children and youth

For years, we have received complaints about the province's administration of services for children with autism – some related to broader policy decisions, and some involving administrative glitches. In March 2016, we received a flurry of complaints after the government's announcement of additional funding for autism programs ($333 million over the next five years) was accompanied by news that it would not pay for intensive therapy for children therapy for children aged 5 or older. In June 2016, a new plan was announced ($200 million over four years), that would include $1,000 per week for therapy of children aged 5 and up. Although our Office does not intervene in broad public policy decisions of this nature, we will continue to monitor the administration of these programs and assist individuals where, for example, rules and procedures are not being followed.

Investigations

Systemic investigation: Services for adults with developmental disabilities in crisis

Report: *Nowhere to Turn*, released August 2016

Investigation update: This report reviewed more than **1,400** complaints and highlighted egregious cases of adults with developmental disabilities in crisis situations, including being abandoned, abused, unnecessarily hospitalized and jailed. All **60** recommendations were accepted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which will report back to our Office on its progress in implementing them at six-month intervals, starting in February 2017.

The investigation revealed that inconsistencies in how funding is prioritized and distributed leave some families so desperate that they have abandoned loved ones with developmental disabilities and complex medical conditions.

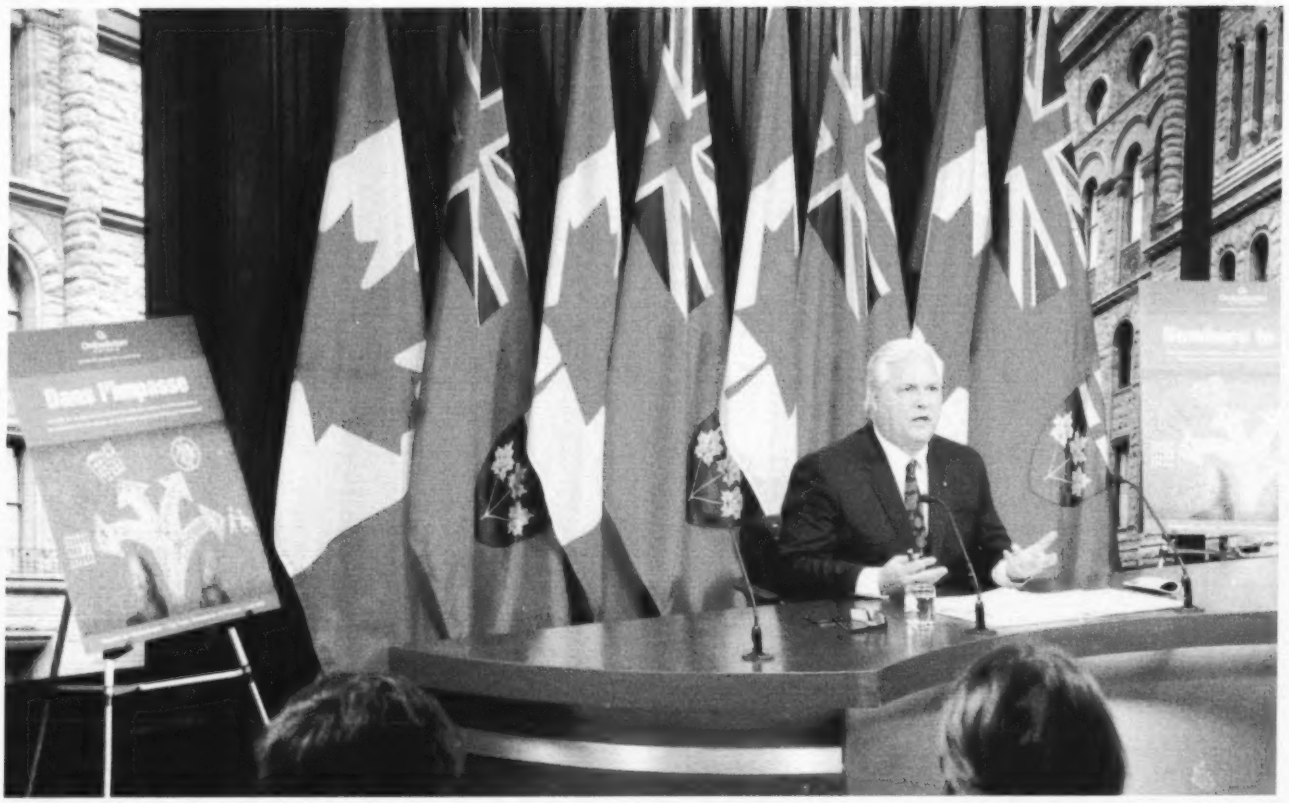
Among other things, the Ombudsman recommended that the Ministry formally recognize its role in directly assisting with crisis cases, establish urgent response resources, and direct that adults with developmental disabilities not be returned to abusive situations or housed inappropriately in hospitals and long-term care homes. Several recommendations also called for improved tracking, monitoring and research to identify service gaps and allow for better planning and flexible solutions to crisis situations.

Launched in November 2012, the Special Ombudsman Response Team's investigation involved interviews with more than 200 families and officials, and the review of more than 25,000 documents, including probes by coroner's inquests, a Select Committee of the Legislature and Ontario's Auditor General. Ombudsman staff also worked to resolve individual crisis situations as they arose throughout the investigation – including helping move 20 people from hospitals to more suitable homes.

We continue to receive complaints about similar crisis situations, and respond to them on an urgent basis. Further updates will be published in forthcoming annual reports.

> I was among those appalled by the stories highlighted in the Ombudsman's report [*Nowhere to Turn*]. I have thanked the Ombudsman and his office for their thoughtful investigation, and I am fully committed to working with our partners in the developmental services sector and my cabinet colleagues across government to address all the recommendations… particularly with respect to residential supports for those with urgent and complex care needs.

Community and Social Services Minister Helena Jaczek, letter to editor, Sarnia Observer, *August 31, 2016*



▲ August 24, 2016: Ombudsman Paul Dubé releases report on services for adults with developmental disabilities who are in crisis, *Nowhere to Turn,* at Ontario Legislature.

Systemic investigation: Care and custody of children with severe special needs

Report: *Between a Rock and Hard Place*, released May 2005

Investigation update: It has been more than a decade since this investigation revealed the serious problem of parents being forced to surrender custody of children who have severe special needs to children's aid societies in order to get the care they needed. Although the government has repeatedly committed to ensuring parents would not be put in this heart-wrenching position, we continue to receive a few such complaints each year.

For example, this past year, we heard from the mother of a 13-year-old girl who has autism, a developmental disability, and other conditions, who was told by a service co-ordination agency that she should ask the local children's aid society to place her daughter in a group home. Ombudsman staff contacted senior officials at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, who were concerned to learn a parent had been given such advice. Shortly thereafter, the mother's request for additional services to help care for the girl at home and give her biweekly respite was approved.

We also helped a mother of a 12-year-old boy with multiple conditions who had been suicidal and violent, and was recommended for long-term residential treatment by a psychiatrist. A worker from the local children's aid society told her that surrendering custody of the boy was the only way to get him into a group home. Our staff spoke to Ministry of Children and Youth Services officials, who expedited the family's request for complex special needs funding – and also clarified with the children's aid society's management that parents should not be told to surrender custody if there are no protection issues. The boy was moved to a treatment group home a week after the funding was approved.

Case summaries

An arresting mistake

A father contacted us from jail after he was arrested for failing to pay child support arrears to the Family Responsibility Office. He was unaware that he owed any support, and he had custody of his child when he was arrested. Our review determined that the FRO's notices were sent to the wrong address, even though his correct address was on file. After our intervention, the amount he owed in arrears was reduced, and the FRO sent him a letter of apology.

Follow the money

A mother of two complained that FRO officials had not done enough to collect the more than **$30,000** in support owed by her ex-husband, even though they knew where he worked. After we contacted FRO officials, they issued notice to the man's employer and have since collected more than **$5,000** in payments by garnishing his wages.

Held at the border

A mother whose support payments from her ex-husband were collected through an enforcement agency in the U.S. complained that the FRO would not release any of it to her because it didn't have the necessary documentation from a U.S. court. She had even travelled to the U.S. in an attempt to get the documents herself and was subsequently facing eviction. After our Office intervened, FRO obtained new documents from the U.S. and released **$9,700** to her.

Painful delay

A woman who was seriously injured in a car accident complained that she waited seven months to receive her application for ODSP benefits. Our staff discovered that her initial call was not responded to for a month, despite a promise on ODSP's website that a case worker would set up an interview within five days. In fact, although a case folder was created for her within five days, she received only one contact from ODSP between March and September 2015. In the meantime, she incurred significant debt and was on the verge of losing her home. Her application was approved in November 2015, and after our intervention, she also received **$4,900** in retroactive ODSP support.

> "Thank you for your very compassionate and professional representation of children and families who have been in contact with your Office."
>
> *Email from Ontario public servant*

"Your report [*Nowhere to Turn*] is a valuable contribution in our continuing work, and I have carefully noted your comments. I know that my colleague [Minister Jaczek] joins me in accepting all of your recommendations. We are committed to working as quickly as we can to act on them."

Premier Kathleen Wynne,
letter to Ombudsman, September 6, 2016

"Thank you for all you have done for me with regards to ODSP…This is a reminder to me and others that even when one feels there is nowhere to turn for help and advice, that one needs to keep on digging deeper for answers as there most likely will be somewhere or someone to turn to. You just have to look deep enough. My complaint may help others."

Complainant

EDUCATION – PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND PROGRAMS

Overview and trends in cases

The Ministry of Education and what was formerly known as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (it became the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development in June 2016), are responsible for Ontario's education system at all levels, from daycare and kindergarten through post-secondary and post-graduate studies. This includes financial assistance programs for students in need and programs to support those seeking to upgrade skills or train for new careers.

Our Office received **757** complaints about these ministries and programs in 2015-2016 – excluding school boards and universities, which only came under our jurisdiction near the end of the fiscal year (for more on these, see the next two sections of this report).

The most common topics of complaint were school repairs, colleges of applied arts and technology, private career colleges and the Ontario Student Assistance Program.

School repairs

Of the **256** complaints we received about the Ministry of Education in 2015-2016, **138** related to a lack of provincial funding for repairs to school buildings (many of these complainants also wrote to the Office of the Premier about this issue). We reviewed but did not intervene in these complaints, as they involved government spending priorities, which, like matters of broad public policy, are not part of the Ombudsman's role. In June 2016, the province announced an additional $1.1 billion over two years for school repairs; in August 2016, the Ministry released a breakdown of needed school repairs across the province, with an estimated total cost of $15.4 billion.

Sex education curriculum

We also received **20** complaints related to changes to the sex education curriculum, which went into effect in September 2015 amid some public controversy. This is an example of an issue of broad public policy, which governments are elected to set. Since these complaints mainly involved disagreement with the curriculum itself, not issues with procedural fairness or the way it was administered, we explained to the complainants that we would not pursue them.

Provincial Schools Branch

We received **50** complaints about the Provincial Schools Branch, which provides specialized schools for students who are deaf and/or blind, or have severe learning disabilities. The bulk of these stemmed from reports that the Ministry intended to close five such schools, after it stopped taking new applications in early 2016. In August 2016, the Minister announced that the schools would remain open. Our Office will continue to monitor developments in this area.

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. **155** Ontario Student Assistance Program
2. **138** Funding for school repairs
3. **137** Colleges of applied arts and technology
4. **135** Private career colleges
5. **50** Provincial Schools Branch

Ontario Student Assistance Program – OSAP

Although administered by the province, student assistance funds come from both the federal and provincial governments, and the federal government administers the repayment process. About one-third of the **155** complaints we received about OSAP were from recipients who were having problems repaying their student loans, or wanted to contest the amount they were being asked to pay. Many complaints were also related to the sudden closure of Everest College, a large private career college, the previous year. Several Everest students saw their eligibility to continue receiving OSAP funds disrupted along with their studies.

Colleges of applied arts and technology

Unlike universities, which only came within our jurisdiction on January 1, 2016, our office has always been able to take complaints about Ontario's 24 colleges of applied arts and technology. We received **137** such complaints in 2015-2016, many raising the same types of issues complained about at universities, such as fees, academic decisions and program requirements.

More than 20% of complaints involved disputes over college tuition fees – usually related to whether students who withdrew from a program did so in time to be eligible for a tuition refund. We also received complaints about how colleges accommodated students with disabilities. Most were resolved informally through referral to or discussion with appropriate college or Ministry officials.

Private career colleges – Everest College

Some **119** of the **135** complaints we received about the then-Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' Private Career Colleges Branch related to the sudden closure of Everest College's 14 campuses in February 2015, which affected nearly 2,700 students. To deal with this surge in complaints, a dedicated team of Ombudsman staff collaborated with a Ministry team headed by the Assistant Deputy Minister.

Our staff helped students deal with delays and communication issues with the Ministry's Training Completion Assurance Fund (TCAF), which assists students in resuming their studies or getting refunds. We also worked with staff at the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to help Everest students sort out issues with loans intended for tuition and living expenses.

For example, a mother of three faced eviction after Everest closed, because her OSAP funding for living expenses was due to run out while she waited for arrangements to be made to resume her studies at another college. Our staff worked out a solution with Ontario Works to provide her with social assistance, and its officials were issued a memo to alert them to similar situations.

We also helped OSAP identify a problem with its systems when five former Everest massage therapy students who had switched to a new college did not receive their loans. As a result of our inquiries, OSAP officials discovered that they could not access the files of these and other former Everest students – and they were able to fix the issue for all concerned.

Investigations

Systemic investigation: Monitoring of unlicensed daycares

Report: *Careless About Child Care*, released October 2014

Investigation update: The Ombudsman's 2014 report revealed serious systemic problems in the Ministry of Education's monitoring of private, unlicensed daycares, where four children died in the seven months prior to the investigation. The Ministry of Education agreed to implement all **113** of the Ombudsman's recommendations. It passed new legislation to modernize and strengthen the regulation of child care – the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* – which came into force on August 31, 2015.

All recommendations in this case have now been addressed. Improvements made by the Ministry include:

- A dedicated enforcement unit to deal with complaints about unlicensed daycares and a toll-free, provincewide number to call to make complaints;
- An advertising campaign to enhance public awareness about child care options, explaining differences between licensed and unlicensed care;
- An online registry that allows the public to find information about violations and convictions of unlicensed daycare operators; and
- Removing a significant licensing loophole for some private schools that provided care for children under kindergarten age.

As of January 1, 2016, private schools must be appropriately licensed if they take children younger than school age. New regulations under the Act also make distinctions between child care and recreational activities for children, fixing a loophole that allowed some unlicensed daycares to operate as "camps." Improved technology that will allow the Ministry's Enforcement Unit to identify complaint trends and enhance proactive enforcement will be introduced later this year.

The Ombudsman's investigation began in the wake of the death of a two-year-old girl at an illegal unlicensed daycare in Vaughan. In February 2016, the operator was convicted of operating a daycare without a licence, and charged with manslaughter in March 2016.

Case summaries

No answer

A woman on a waiting list for a popular, limited-enrolment college program called our Office for help when she could not get any information from the college about whether she had been accepted. We discovered that for this program, the college only made acceptance offers to students over the phone, not by mail or email. College officials did phone the woman, but were unable to reach her or leave a message, because she did not have voicemail. As a result of our intervention, the woman was able to register in the program, and the college committed to consider making acceptance offers by email in future.

Pressed for cash

A college student who was taking "compressed" courses over the summer questioned why she didn't qualify for full-time OSAP funding, as her college had previously determined that her compressed course load made her eligible. Our inquiries determined that the college had made an error, and the woman did not meet the full-time funding threshold – but to make up for this, the college arranged a grant to ease her financial hardship. The case also prompted the Ministry to review the information it provides to financial aid offices with regard to compressed courses.

Buy the book

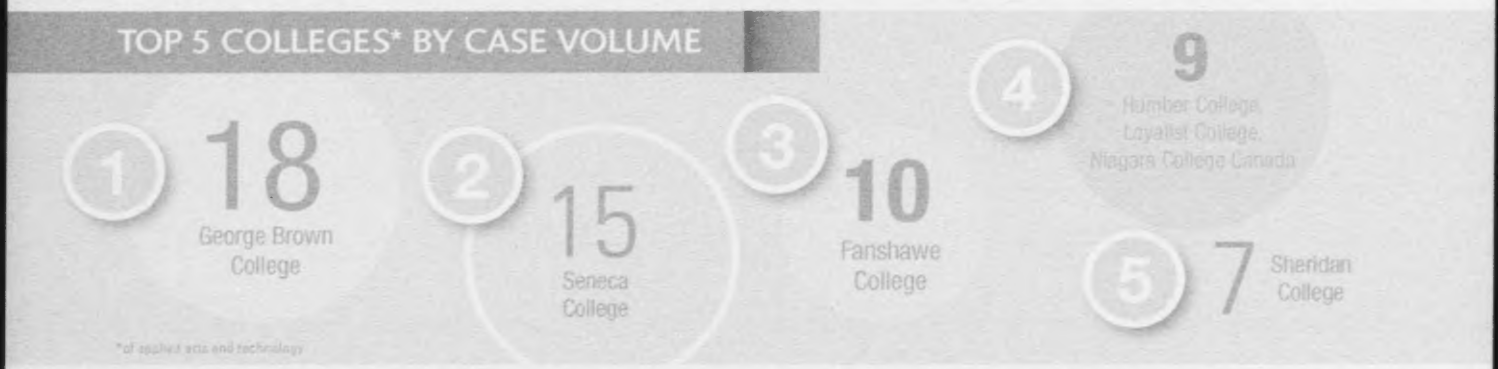
A student who bought **$1,000** worth of textbooks for her studies at the suddenly-closed Everest College complained that foot-dragging by officials at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities caused her to miss a deadline to receive a 60% refund on the books, which were now worthless to her. She had tried to contact the Ministry five times, with no response. After our intervention, the Ministry acknowledged it had provided poor customer service in this case, and agreed to reimburse the cost of her books.

Too far to go

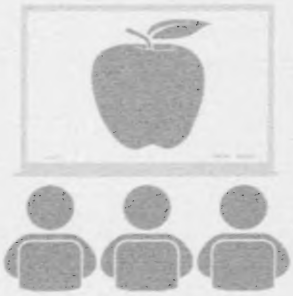
A mother who had been commuting two hours every day to attend classes at an Everest College campus applied for funding to resume her studies elsewhere after the college closed. However, the only program available in her field would have required a five-hour daily commute. She was offered a partial refund under the Training Completion Assurance Fund, but Ombudsman staff determined she should be eligible for a full refund, as the long commute would be an undue hardship. We arranged for her request to be reconsidered, and she was granted a full refund.

Back in action

An Everest College student who was away from the school on medical leave when it abruptly closed was turned down for assistance in enrolling in a new program because his college record did not list him as an active student at the time of the closure. When Ombudsman staff provided Training Completion Assurance Fund officials with proof of the student's medical records and re-enrolment paperwork, they agreed that he qualified for assistance.



A breakdown of cases by college can be found in the Appendix.



EDUCATION – SCHOOL BOARDS

Overview and trends in cases

School boards were the first area of the broader public sector to come under the Ombudsman's mandate with the changes ushered in by Bill 8, the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*. The change took effect on September 1, 2015, just before the start of the school year.

Between September 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, we received **398** cases about **54** school boards. Some **289** of these cases were closed by the end of the fiscal year, most through informal resolution or referral to existing mechanisms at the boards. Another **68** complaints were received between April 1 and August 31, 2015 – before our new mandate took effect. We referred these people to help as warranted, while noting that they could file a complaint with us after September 1, 2015 if their issues were not resolved.

In preparation for this expanded jurisdiction, our staff spent much of 2015 doing extensive research in education law, developing internal information resources (including a wiki), conducting a survey of school boards across the province to gather information on their policies, administration and points of contact, and establishing and training a dedicated team to handle school board complaints. The Deputy Ombudsman, Ombudsman and many other staff members consulted and engaged with school board officials at various levels to hear their concerns about our new oversight and explain our processes.

As with all complaints we receive, our Office serves as a last resort and works to resolve school board complaints at the local level wherever possible. For example, if a parent has a complaint but has not yet raised it with the school principal or the relevant superintendent, our staff will suggest those steps first. If the person has indeed exhausted all available mechanisms, we will contact school board staff about the issue directly, review the facts and consider the board's relevant policies and procedures. In many cases this year, we were able to resolve the matter with board officials or suggest improvements to board processes; in others, we determined the board acted in a fair and reasonable manner.

The most common topics of complaint involved school staff and employment matters, special education, student safety and security (including bullying), and transportation. We also received multiple complaints about student discipline procedures, pupil attendance policies, school closures, and the application of trustee codes of conduct.

Staff conduct and employment issues

We received **68** complaints about school board staff and another **43** about employment related issues. Complaints about specific staff members were referred to the appropriate internal complaints process, through the school board's hierarchy or relevant processes for harassment and discrimination complaints. If a complainant has tried these avenues, our Office will not make determinations about the conduct of staff, but can review whether relevant processes were followed.

Complaints about employment issues were referred to the complainant's union or the Ontario Labour Relations Board;

WE OVERSEE

72 school boards

31 English public boards

29 English Catholic boards

8 French Catholic boards

4 French public boards

10 school authorities

complaints about conduct of teaching staff may also be referred to the Ontario College of Teachers.

Trustee conduct

We received **6** complaints related to the conduct of elected school trustees – most focusing on how their code of conduct applies to their interactions with the public.

When a trustee makes a complaint about another trustee, the process is usually clear: It is set out in the *Education Act* and is generally reflected in the codes adopted by boards. But it is less clear when someone other than a trustee makes a complaint. We discovered two boards that did not have mechanisms for handling such complaints – instead, the board chairs had adopted ad hoc processes that weren't clearly communicated.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, our Office encourages school boards to set out in their policies, procedures or codes how stakeholders can raise conduct concerns and how these complaints will be handled.

Special education

We received **62** complaints related to special education, many involving decisions of Identification, Placement and Review Committees, which determine a student's eligibility for special education services and the nature of those services. In many cases, the complainants came to our office before using available appeal and review processes, and we referred them accordingly.

However, most complaints were from parents who were dissatisfied with the services provided to their children under Individual Education Plans. Our involvement in such cases was generally to facilitate communication between parents, school boards and teaching staff, to find outcomes that meet children's needs in light of board resources.

In one case, a group of parents complained about their school board closing some special education classrooms. Although the board had in fact put appropriate resources in place, we determined that communication between parents and school board staff was lacking and the children's transition between classrooms was not as smooth as it could have been.

Special needs and "exclusions"

One area of concern that our Office has noticed with regard to special education is the use of a provision of the *Education Act* to exclude high-needs students with behavioural issues from school while arrangements are being made to ensure proper supports are in place. The Act allows principals to refuse to admit someone to a school if there is a risk to student safety. However, we have seen several cases where boards lack specific policies to address when and how such exclusions are imposed, and how they may be appealed. Our Office encourages all school boards to implement specific policies for exclusions that, at minimum, set out how notice is provided, ensure that reasons are given, and include some form of appeal procedure.

Good to KNOW

Statistics for cases about **school boards** cover the period from September 1, 2015 (when our jurisdiction took effect) to March 31, 2016.

A breakdown of cases by school board can be found in the Appendix.

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. **74** Staff and trustee conduct
2. **62** Special education
3. **50** Transportation
4. **43** Enrolment/boundary issues; Employment issues
5. **36** Student safety

▲ December 11, 2015: Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay (then Acting Ombudsman) speaks to officials from 16 school boards in Waterloo.

▲ February 17, 2016: General Counsel Wendy Ray speaks to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario in Toronto.

Safety and security

Some **30** of the **36** complaints we received about safety and security were from parents concerned that their board's response to incidents of bullying was inadequate. Our staff facilitated communication between complainants and boards to find resolutions in the best interests of the affected children, and reviewed board processes. Our Office is gathering information about best practices for dealing with these situations, which we will use in suggesting future improvements to boards.

We also received complaints about "no-trespass" orders imposed by some boards. In most cases, we determined that boards have good reasons for such orders, however, the restrictions should be limited as much as possible and for only a set time, and they should be made in accordance with relevant procedures, with reasons given. This ensures a balance between the school board's need to ensure safety and respect for individual stakeholders' rights. In one such case, a school issued a no-trespass order to a father for yelling at school staff; our Office helped make arrangements so he could still walk his daughter to kindergarten.

A few complaints involved the response of school boards to children's allergies. In one such case where a child had severe food allergies, we found that although the board's response did not go to the extent requested by the parents, it accommodated the child in accordance with its policies.

Student transfers and enrolment

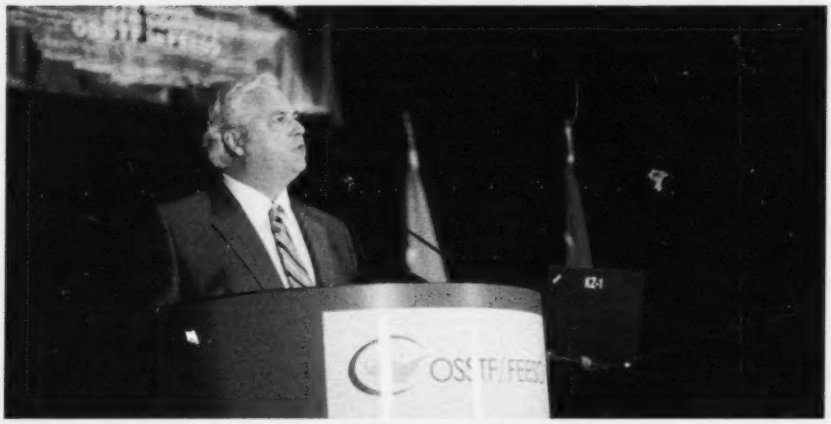
School board decisions that restrict enrolment in a school or affect attendance boundaries can often be contentious. We received **43** complaints about enrolment and boundary issues, many related to board decisions to move students from one school to another. Our focus in such cases was on how the board planned the transition, to ensure it accommodated student needs as much as possible, and followed its policies and procedures.

In one case, a parent complained about a school board's lottery process for admissions to a particular school; however, our inquiries determined that the process was fair and reasonable.

School closures

We received **15** complaints about school closures during the fiscal year. All school boards must follow Ministry of Education guidelines for such decisions. As an office of last resort, we do not intervene in the required consultation and review process and cannot undo decisions. That said, we can seek ways to ensure that the board's actions related to school closings are handled in a fair and transparent manner.

For example, we made inquiries at the conclusion of one such process, where the board failed to initiate a pupil accommodation review, and we sought information about how it would avoid



◀ August 18, 2016: Ombudsman Paul Dubé speaks to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in Ottawa.

such situations in future. In another case, when we learned of a group of students whose school was closing before construction on their new school had even begun, we verified that the board had a transition plan in place. Portable classrooms were set up at another school and staggered hours were established to make the influx of additional students less disruptive, all according to board policies.

Expropriation

Shortly after our new jurisdiction took effect, we received complaints from a group of homeowners whose property was being expropriated by a school board so it could build a new school on the land. Our investigators reviewed the board's handling of this decision, going back several years, and determined that it correctly followed the process in place under the *Expropriation Act*, including consulting the homeowners and offering them compensation (which they have the right to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board). We informed the homeowners that our review determined that a formal investigation was not warranted.

Transportation

We received **50** complaints about transportation – most about school busing arrangements at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. These included concerns about the safety of pick-up/drop-off points, the length of time children were on school buses, as well as the safety of walking routes where transportation was not provided. Our approach in these cases was to ensure policies and procedures were followed by boards and their transportation providers. In several cases, our inquiries resulted in the board or its transportation consortium making improvements for the benefit of all concerned.

For example, after a frightening incident where a four-year-old boy was dropped off at the wrong stop and left standing alone by the side of the road until a passerby returned him to school, our investigators made inquiries with the board's transportation consortium, which acknowledged it was a case of driver

TOP 5 SCHOOL BOARDS, BY CASE VOLUME

1. **65** Toronto District School Board
2. **41** Toronto Catholic District School Board
3. **31** Thames Valley District School Board
4. **23** Peel District School Board
5. **17** Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

error. The consortium also apologized to the boy's mother and improved its driver training and incident reporting procedures.

In a few cases, we determined that school boards were following their policies, but not communicating them well. When several families in the same neighbourhood were deemed ineligible for busing services because they did not live far enough away from their children's school, they were unable to find out the distance calculation that the school board used for its decision. After we suggested the board make this information available, it agreed to develop a policy for doing so.

Similarly, when families complained about the lack of notice they were given about school bus route changes, we spoke with their board's Director of Education, who committed to providing parents with at least a week's notice of changes, as well as a clearer explanation of the board's appeal process.

Discipline procedures

We received **25** complaints about student discipline, suspensions and expulsions during the fiscal year. Although our Office cannot overturn decisions to suspend or expel students, nor intervene in ongoing appeal processes, we did look at how relevant policies were applied and whether the processes were fair and transparent. For example, we discovered two boards whose practices in dealing with suspensions and expulsions differed from what was in their policies. We encouraged both boards to update their policies to ensure affected students and parents know what to expect and are treated fairly.

Investigations

We did not launch any formal investigations related to school boards in fiscal 2015-2016, but the Ombudsman has since launched one systemic investigation.

Systemic investigation: School busing issues in Toronto

Launched: September 2016

Investigation update: When more than 1,000 children in the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board were left waiting for school buses that did not show up over the course of several days in early September 2016, the Ombudsman directed the Special Ombudsman Response Team to determine whether or not a systemic investigation was warranted. Two weeks later, the boards were notified of our formal investigation, which focuses on their oversight of student transportation and whether their response to the recent delays and disruptions was adequate.

The matter involves some 60 school bus routes that lacked drivers, who are contracted through a transportation consortium shared by the boards. Among the questions investigators are reviewing are whether the boards adequately prepared for and informed parents about the situation. At the time this report was finalized, the investigation was ongoing.

Case summaries

Cars curbed

A woman complained to us after trying for months to get a school board to respond to her safety concerns about vehicles regularly driving up onto a curb on school property near an entrance for young children. After our staff contacted board officials, they agreed there was an issue, installed "no parking" signs, and advised staff to refrain from parking in the area.

No place like home

A mother of a teenage boy with autism sought our Office's help after her son was restricted to 45 minutes of school per day due to behavioural issues. She wanted to home-school her son, but the board insisted he come to class for 45 minutes every day. After our staff facilitated communications between the mother and the school board, it was agreed that she could arrange to have him home-schooled with an educational assistant, and the school would provide and mark his work.

The safer way

The mother of a Grade 4 student was concerned for her son's safety because he had to cross a busy intersection on his walk to school. He was denied busing services, even though younger children in the area were being bused to school. After our Office referred her to the school board's superintendent of transportation, the board agreed to provide busing services for her son.

Better, not late

The mother of a kindergarten student with special needs complained that her son's bus was repeatedly late and that he had once been dropped off at the wrong address. One month into the school year, he had not yet attended a full day. At our suggestion, she complained to the board's student transportation services officials, who met with the bus operators the same week. The bus company's services improved significantly after that meeting.

Teachable moment

After a teacher-in-charge kept a student out of class for more than two hours over an incident, the student's mother complained to us about the board's response to her concerns. As a result of our inquiries, the board sent the mother a letter of apology and began developing guidelines to help principals and teachers-in-charge investigate such incidents.

EDUCATION – UNIVERSITIES

Overview and trends in cases

Although our Office has always had oversight over colleges because they are the direct responsibility of the provincial government, our new jurisdiction over Ontario's **21** publicly funded universities did not take effect until January 1, 2016. Between that date and the end of the fiscal year on March 31, 2016, we received **92** cases about **18** universities. (Another **49** cases were received between April 1 and December 31, 2015 – before our new mandate took effect. We referred these people to help as warranted, while noting that they could return to us after January 1, 2016 if their issues were not resolved.)

To prepare for this new mandate, our Office conducted extensive outreach with university stakeholders, including the Council of Ontario Universities, student and faculty associations, and university ombudsman offices, to explain how we work and to gather information about how each university resolves issues internally. This included conducting a survey of universities across the province and hosting a one-day symposium for university ombudsmen and complaints staff in November 2015.

Our Office encourages all universities to establish independent and impartial ombudsman offices. At present, about a dozen exist, but their scope and independence vary. Some receive complaints only from current students; some do not review academic appeal processes or take complaints from staff.

As an office of last resort, our role in most cases involves ensuring that the university's existing complaint or appeal mechanisms are being applied fairly and in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

The most common complaints were related to requests for academic accommodation, parking, admissions and issues with university programs. In referring the bulk of complaints back to universities for internal resolution, our Office has found that they generally have sophisticated mechanisms in place for handling most concerns.

It should also be noted that by law, principles of academic freedom are taken into consideration when our Office reviews complaints about universities (s. 30 of the *Ombudsman Act*). Our focus is mainly on administrative conduct and on facilitating communication and resolution between complainants and relevant university officials.

Investigations

We did not launch any formal investigations related to universities in fiscal 2015-2016, or in the interim prior to the finalization of this report.

TOP 5 UNIVERSITIES BY CASE VOLUME

1. York University – 14
2. Lakehead University – 11
3. Ryerson University – 9
4. University of Ottawa, University of Waterloo – 8
5. University of Toronto – 7

Case summaries

Second chance

A PhD student who was given no opportunity to repeat his final exam when he failed on his first try after 16 months of course work complained to our Office that he had hit a dead end in the university's appeal process. Our inquiries determined that staff had misapplied university policy, and as a result, the student was given a chance to appeal the decision further.

Fail safe

A student complained that he had failed a course due to false information provided to his professor by a teaching assistant. We directed him back to the university's grades appeal process, explaining that we are an office of last resort and our role is not to overturn decisions, but if he is unsatisfied at the conclusion of the process, he can return to us and we can assess how it was handled.

Admit one

A would-be Bachelor of Education student complained that he was denied admission because of a mistake in his application due to a miscommunication with the university. We referred him to the university's dispute resolution service.

Distance discount

A distance education student complained he was asked to pay fees for various services only available on campus, such as student lifestyle fees. We referred him to information on the university's website about compulsory and non-compulsory fees, and provided information about how to get a refund of any non-compulsory fees he had already paid.

Good to KNOW

Statistics for cases about **universities** cover the period from January 1, 2016 (when our jurisdiction took effect) to March 31, 2016.

A breakdown of complaints by university can be found in the Appendix.

"Our focus is mainly on administrative conduct and on facilitating communication and resolution between complainants and relevant university officials."

▼ February 10, 2016: Director of Investigations Sue Haslam speaks to the Ontario University Registrars' Association in Toronto.

▼ February 20, 2016: General Counsel Laura Pettigrew speaks to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations in Toronto.

◀ May 12, 2016: Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay (fourth from right) meets with University of Windsor student ombudsman Kris McInnis and students in Windsor.

"Our Office encourages all universities to establish independent and impartial ombudsman offices."

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. 20 Academic appeals and exams
2. 16 Fees and financial assistance
3. 9 Employee issues
4. 8 Instructor and staff conduct
5. 6 Safety and security

MUNICIPALITIES – GENERAL

Overview and trends in cases

Ontarians have complained to their Ombudsman about municipalities ever since our Office first opened its doors in 1975 – so much so, the first Ombudsman, Arthur Maloney, began calling for jurisdiction over municipalities that year. Between 2005 and 2015, we received **10,698** municipal complaints – or just over 1,000 per year. But all of these had to be turned away: It was not until changes in the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014* took effect on January 1, 2016, that we could begin accepting municipal complaints.

Even this fiscal year, before our jurisdiction came into effect, we received **1,492** complaints about municipalities (between April 1 and December 31, 2015). We referred these people to help as warranted, while noting that they could file a complaint with us after January 1, 2016 if their issues were not resolved.

Between January 1 and March 31, with our mandate finally in effect, we received **918** cases about **227** municipalities. Most were resolved quickly without need for a formal investigation.

Adding all **444** municipalities to our jurisdiction represented an enormous increase. Our office worked for more than a year to prepare, researching municipal law and policy structures, training staff, establishing internal research resources and conducting a survey of municipal officials across the province to gather information on policies, accountability structures and points of contact. Given the expected volume of municipal complaints, even our phone system was updated to allow calls to go directly to our dedicated municipal team.

As with all complaints we receive, we work to find a resolution at the lowest possible level. With municipalities, this means referring people to local officials to resolve their issues first, as we are an office of last resort.

The Ombudsman's role is not to replace local accountability mechanisms or to intervene in municipal council decisions; rather, we review how local policies and procedures are applied and followed. Complaints are best addressed at the local level by those directly involved in the issue.

We encourage all municipalities to have strong and accessible processes to deal with complaints and appeals, and to establish local accountability officers such as integrity commissioners, auditors general and ombudsmen.

Good to KNOW

Statistics for cases about municipalities cover the period from **January 1, 2016** (when our jurisdiction took effect) to **March 31, 2016**.

A breakdown of complaints by municipality can be found in the Appendix.

For information about our investigations of closed municipal meetings, see the next chapter.

TOP 5 MUNICIPALITIES BY CASE VOLUME

1. 75 Toronto
2. 74 Muskoka Lakes
3. 52 Ottawa
4. 30 Hamilton
5. 23 London

▲ May 6, 2016: Ombudsman Paul Dubé speaks to the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities conference in Goderich.

▼ February 22, 2016: Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay (then Acting Ombudsman) speaks to the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and Ontario Good Roads Association conference in Toronto.

▲ August 16, 2016: Counsel Joanna Bull speaks to City of Windsor officials in Windsor.

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. **266** Councils and committees
2. **66** Ontario Works
3. **63** By-law enforcement
4. **57** Municipal hydro
5. **49** Housing

When cases cannot be resolved at the local level, we assess whether they can be resolved through Ombudsman intervention or investigation.

Although our oversight now includes almost all municipal government bodies and services (except police and police services boards, children's aid societies, library boards and public health boards), the most common complaint topic by far was councils and committees. As in previous years, we referred most of the **284** complaints we received about municipal police to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

As might be expected, larger municipalities tended to attract larger numbers of cases; the cities of **Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton** and **London** were four of the five top municipalities by case volume. However, a controversy related to one local issue – an energy project in the community of **Muskoka Lakes** – put that municipality in second place by case volume.

Review of legislation

At the time this report was written, the province was in the midst of a review of municipal legislation. Our Office was consulted as part of this process and recommended, among other things, that all municipalities be required to adopt a code of conduct, and that they be provided with a uniform framework to ensure consistent standards in codes across the province.

Complaints about councils/ committees

Of the **266** complaints we received about councils or committees, our focus was on administrative and procedural conduct, not political decisions of elected officials. In many cases where we found problems or gaps in a municipality's policies or procedures, the municipalities in question accepted our suggestions for improvement without need for a formal investigation.

For instance, while reviewing a complaint about a municipality giving jobs to relatives of councillors, we found the municipality lacked clear, consistent and transparent employment practices. We raised concerns and council directed staff to address the issues we identified. As part of its response, the municipality created a new website and began posting its council and committee minutes and by-laws online.

Other municipalities improved the way they provide documents to the public. After a man complained to us that the only way to access the minutes of his local Committee of Adjustment was online, the clerk reminded the committee of its obligation to make hard-copy minutes available. Another municipality was prompted to fix several months' worth of minutes after a complaint to our Office revealed a computer glitch that resulted in incomplete records being published.

Conduct and integrity commissioners

Most complaints about council and committees related to conduct, and we routinely responded by recommending the municipalities adopt a code of conduct and appoint an integrity commissioner. For example, we reviewed one case about the behaviour of a few council members, but there was no code of conduct or process in place to deal with the issue, and the councillors refused to comply with an outside consultant's recommended sanctions. We suggested the municipality adopt a code of conduct and appoint an integrity commissioner, who would be empowered by the *Municipal Act* to recommend financial sanctions on councillors.

In another case, the municipality had a code of conduct, but took more than three months to respond to a man's complaint about a councillor using inappropriate language toward him. We discovered that council was about to issue a report on the complaint, but neglected to inform the man, assuming he would simply hear about it through word of mouth in the small community. The municipality agreed to our recommendation that it give status updates to complainants directly.

We also received complaints about integrity commissioners. But we are not an appeal body. Rather, we review whether the integrity commissioner acted fairly and in accordance with relevant legislation, terms of references and policies, and provided sufficient reasons for decisions. In one case, a municipal committee member complained to us that the local integrity commissioner reported to council on a problem with her conduct, without telling her the report would be discussed in open session and posted publicly online. We recommended the municipality clarify its processes for all concerned and ensure all committee members are aware of their obligations under the code of conduct.

Municipal ombudsman

Where a municipality has appointed its own ombudsman, we cannot review a complaint within their jurisdiction until they have completed their review, declined to investigate, or the time limit for bringing a complaint to them has expired. (One exception: We do not have authority over the City of Toronto Ombudsman.)

For example, we reviewed one complaint that a local ombudsman had refused to investigate a complaint about a council phasing out a tax in violation of its own procedural by-law. The local ombudsman determined that the complaint was about conduct and referred the issue to the local integrity commissioner, but agreed to review the complaint after we pointed out that procedural concerns had also been raised

Ontario Works

We received **66** complaints about Ontario Works, the social assistance program administered by municipalities

> I believe in finding win-win-win situations, and it seems to me that Bill 8 has given all of us that opportunity. The increased public demand for local accountability is a win. The proliferation of local integrity commissioners, auditors general and ombudsmen is a win. The expansion of my Office's jurisdiction is a win. The winners are the people we all serve.
>
> *Ombudsman Paul Dubé,*
> *speech to Municipal Integrity Commissioners of Ontario, Vaughan, April 26, 2016*

on behalf of the province. Many of the people who receive Ontario Works benefits are vulnerable and may need extra help navigating the benefits system. For example, we helped a 16-year-old boy who was kicked out of his home and needed money to pay rent while he attended high school. After he complained that local Ontario Works staff denied his request over the phone, we spoke to a manager who ensured he received benefits.

We also helped a woman who is on disability support for a brain injury obtain discretionary funds from the local Ontario Works to help with the **$3,500** cost of her mother's funeral, after her first request received no response. When we contacted the municipality, we discovered it had no record of the woman's request; its staff quickly arranged to have the bill paid. Similarly, our staff helped a formerly homeless woman sort out numerous errors in her Ontario Works file that left her without first and last months' rent. Once we suggested the file be reviewed, the mistakes were found and she received a cheque within days.

By-law enforcement

Although our role is generally not to intervene in matters of policy, including local by-laws, we can look at whether or not processes are fair, including the manner in which by-laws are enforced. Most of the **63** complaints we received about by-law enforcement were about fairness; some also came from people upset that by-laws were not being enforced – e.g., when neighbours violated noise or property standards by-laws.

In one case, a man who was told to clean up his yard because it contravened the municipality's yard maintenance by-law complained that he did not understand which specific items he needed to remove. The municipality's by-law enforcement manager explained to us that their staff had in fact given the man a detailed list of items, walked through the yard with him to explain the requirements in detail, and extended the cleanup deadline several times. We determined the municipality's process was appropriate and helped the man understand what needed to be done.

Municipal hydro

Although provincially-run Hydro One was removed from the Ombudsman's oversight when the government partially privatized it as of December 2015, our Office gained oversight of municipally-controlled hydro corporations as of January 1, 2016.

Most of the **57** complaints we received between that date and March 31, 2016 were similar to those we saw with Hydro One: Billing errors, unexplained bills, and access issues for vulnerable people.

One senior called our Office after receiving a catch-up bill for more than **$3,000**. Her municipal hydro company told her that, due to a mix-up, she had been billed for another unit in her apartment building since 2010, and would now have to pay the difference owed. After we made inquiries, the company agreed to waive the entire amount, recognizing she was living on a fixed income.

Another municipally-owned hydro company placed a load limiter on an 80-year-old widow's home, claiming her account was in arrears. When we made inquiries, we learned that the debt was actually attached to an account for a now-bankrupt business she owned with her recently-deceased husband. When we asked company officials to review this case, they agreed the business debt should have been pursued against the business, not transferred to the woman's residential account. The debt was lifted, the load limiter was removed, and her full service was restored.

Housing

We received **49** complaints related to municipal housing, which we were usually able to resolve through inquiries with relevant staff. One tenant in a rent-geared-to-income unit funded by a municipal housing authority contacted us because he was repeatedly threatened by a neighbouring tenant. He was facing homelessness, because he feared for his safety and felt he had to leave his apartment, while still paying for it. After we raised the matter with housing authority officials, they discovered other complaints about the neighbour, who was ultimately evicted, and the tenant was able to return home.

A woman and her grandson who had been waiting three years for a municipal housing unit contacted our Office because they were about to become homeless after a temporary stay at a women's crisis centre. We made inquiries with the local District Social Services Administration Board, which met with her. Soon after, a municipal housing unit became available, and she and her grandson moved in.

Investigations

We did not launch formal investigations into any municipal complaints during the 2015-2016 fiscal year – that is, between the start of our municipal jurisdiction on January 1, 2016 and March 31, 2016. However, in the interim prior to the finalization of this report, we notified municipalities of **2** formal investigations, including a systemic investigation into procurement practices at the City of Brampton. Both investigations were in progress at the time this report was completed.

Systemic investigation: City of Brampton procurement practices – launched May 2016

Investigation update: In the wake of several public controversies, Brampton city council passed two resolutions (in May 2015 and February 2016) requesting the Ombudsman investigate specific matters affecting the city, including procurement, planning approvals, real estate, and a specific tender process involving a real estate project in the city's South West Quadrant. However, the Ombudsman' jurisdiction is prescribed by legislation, and decisions on whether and what to investigate are entirely up to the Ombudsman.

The Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT) made inquiries with the city and determined that the issue of non-competitive procurements could potentially have systemic implications. In May 2016, the Ombudsman announced an investigation into the city's procurement practices, focusing on the administration of its purchasing by-laws, policies and procedures regarding non-competitive procurements. The South West Quadrant project was not included, as it is the subject of ongoing litigation.

At the time this report was finalized, SORT investigators were assessing evidence to determine next steps in the investigation. They have conducted more than 30 interviews and reviewed a large volume of documents.

Case summaries

Snow problem

A man told our Office he had tried for 10 years to find out why the municipality removed the snow from the sidewalk in front of his neighbours' homes, but not his. We contacted the municipality's infrastructure services staff, who discovered the location had been taken off the snowplow route some time ago because the sidewalk needed repairs; they neglected to add it back to the route after the sidewalk was fixed. They contacted the man to let him know snow clearing of his sidewalk would resume.

Fee factor

A homeowner complained that a **$1,950** fee he paid to make a severance application was not refunded when his application was denied. Our inquiries with the municipality revealed that the application fee is non-refundable, but this is not communicated to applicants before they pay. The municipality agreed with our recommendation that it should make this information public on its website and/or on the application itself.

Billing bungle

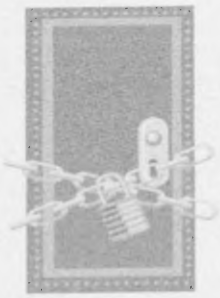
A man complained after he received a municipal hydro bill of **$1,300**, when his normal monthly bill was around $29. The company told him his bills had been incorrect for the past two years, but would not provide him evidence of the errors. After Ombudsman staff spoke with the hydro company's director of operations, he explained the error was due to a software glitch, and he directed that the customer be given a detailed spreadsheet showing his actual usage for the two years. The customer was happy with the detailed explanation and entered into a payment plan to cover the bill.

WE OVERSEE

444
municipalities

WE RECEIVED

918 cases about 227 municipalities



MUNICIPALITIES – CLOSED MEETINGS

Overview and trends in cases

Although the historic expansion of our Office's jurisdiction to include full oversight of municipalities did not come into effect until January 1, 2016, the Ombudsman's mandate has included complaints about closed meetings for more than eight years.

As of January 1, 2008, amendments to the *Municipal Act, 2001* required all municipalities to appoint an investigator for public complaints about closed meetings. Municipalities can appoint the investigator of their choice – the Ombudsman is the investigator for all municipalities unless they appoint someone else. This system was not affected by Bill 8, the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act*, which expanded our oversight to all areas of municipal government.

As of March 31, 2016, the number of municipalities using our Office as closed meeting investigator reached a new high – **218**. Closed meeting complaints are handled by our Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team (OMLET), and our approach to these cases differs somewhat from the traditional ombudsman role, because it is strictly limited to determining whether a closed meeting falls within one of 10 narrowly defined exceptions set out in s. 239 of the *Municipal Act*, and whether the municipality complied with the Act and its own procedure by-law in closing the meeting.

During the seven months between September 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, we reviewed **45** complaints and inquiries related to municipalities where our Office is the investigator. These involved **45** meetings in **22** different municipalities. The Ombudsman's findings were reported to the municipalities and made public (on our website): Some **31%** of the meetings reviewed (**14**) were illegal under the Act, and there were **29** procedural violations. The Ombudsman also made **53** "best practice" recommendations for municipalities to improve their handling of closed meetings.

In most cases we reviewed, even where meetings were found to be illegal, we received good co-operation from municipal officials – and our recommendations were accepted.

Be it resolved

The *Municipal Act* requires a resolution be passed before a council, local board, or committee goes into closed session. The resolution must state the fact of the closed meeting and the general nature of the subject matter to be discussed, with as much informative detail as possible. We received several complaints about meetings where municipalities failed to do this.

For example, councils for the **Township of Russell, Municipality of Brighton, Township of West Lincoln, Township of Bonfield,** and **Village of Casselman** all erred by failing to describe the subject matter to be discussed in their resolutions.

The **City of Port Colborne** council committed a procedural violation by

WE RECEIVED

45 cases about **45** meetings in **22** municipalities

14 meetings found illegal

53 best practices suggested

29 procedural violations found

31% of meetings reviewed were illegal

A breakdown of closed meeting cases by municipality can be found in the Appendix.

closing a meeting with a resolution full of what city staff called "alphabet soup" – referencing every subsection of s. 239, rather than specifying which ones applied to the topics at hand. And councils for **Armour Township** and the **Village of Burk's Falls** violated the Act when they passed the resolution to close a meeting *after* entering a closed session.

"Personal matters"

As in previous years, the exception most often cited incorrectly was s. 239(2)(b) – "personal matters about an identifiable individual." When the **City of Port Colborne** and the **Township of Russell** councils talked about local businesses, their discussions were not "personal matters." Similarly, when the **Township of West Lincoln** and the **Township of Russell** councils used this exception to discuss information about specific properties, they did not reveal personal information about the property owners.

Email meetings

The open meeting rules are designed to protect the public's right to be present and observe local government in process. When a quorum of council meets informally, in private, or over email or telephone, the public does not have notice of the meeting and cannot observe the proceedings.

Council members for the **Town of Essex** held an illegal closed meeting over email when they decided to change the wording of a prayer used at the beginning of council meetings. A quorum of members of a committee of the **Township of McKellar** did the same, using email to decide on a recommendation to council. However, when **South Bruce Peninsula** council members responded to questions from a constituent, the emails were simply information-sharing and did not lay the groundwork for a future council decision.

In a September 2016 report (after the time period covered in this report's statistics), the Ombudsman found that council for **Leeds and the Thousand Islands** met illegally via email in February 2016, recommending for the third time that the township cease the practice of meeting via email. Some members of council told us they felt the open meeting rules were too onerous and should be modernized to allow email meetings. However, the Ombudsman's role is to apply the existing law, and the law is clear – meetings by email and other electronic formats are not permitted by the *Municipal Act*. Council members have the right to make suggestions for legislative reform to the provincial government, but council is bound to comply with existing laws in the meantime.

Sensitive business information

There is no exception in the *Municipal Act* for discussions about confidential or sensitive business information, as the **Township of Russell** council found when it discussed an agreement with a wind energy company *in camera*. Some municipalities have raised concerns that the Act does not allow this, such as the **City of Port Colborne**, which had a similar illegal closed council meeting to discuss the potential sale of shares in a municipally-controlled telecommunications company. We suggested the City raise this concern as part of the government's recent review of municipal legislation.

Review of legislation

At the time this report was written, the province's review of municipal legislation was ongoing. With regard to closed meetings, our Office recommended, among other things, including a clear definition of "meeting" in the *Municipal Act*, and imposing consequences for those who violate the open meeting rules.

Case summaries

Locked out

After a brief public disturbance at a June 2015 meeting required the doors of City Hall to be locked, the **City of London** council resumed proceedings, believing the doors had been reopened. However, a security mistake meant that the front doors actually remained locked through parts of the meeting, blocking public access. As this constituted an illegal meeting, we recommended that the city create a formal security policy to avoid these mistakes in the future.

Nothing personal

In several meetings between 2012 and 2015, the **Municipality of St.-Charles** council met illegally behind closed doors, using the "personal matters" exception to discuss an annual audit report and management letters, even though no individual employees were identified. However, some discussions did fit within this exception, when they involved employee conduct.

In December 2015, we issued a separate annual report on closed meeting cases, which covered the period from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015.

The statistics in this section cover just seven months – from **September 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016**.

As of next year's Annual Report, we will return to reporting all case statistics on an April-March fiscal year.

Investigating closed municipal meetings
Promoting open, transparent local government
Enquêter sur les réunions municipales à huis clos

◀ December 16, 2015: Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay (then Acting Ombudsman) releases 2014-2015 annual report on Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team cases.

Illegal get-together

When **Armour Township** and the **Village of Burk's Falls** met in January 2015 to talk about the possibility of amalgamating their municipalities, the meeting was illegal, as it did not fit within any of the exceptions in the Act, despite the desire of both councils to keep their early discussions confidential. The councils also failed to comply with several procedural rules in their respective by-laws.

Federal case

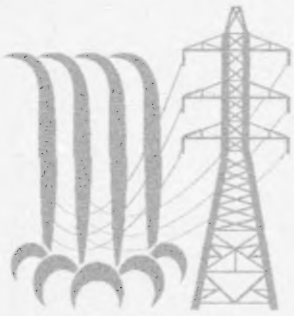
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met behind closed doors with council for the **City of Greater Sudbury** in April 2016, but our review determined that it did not constitute an illegal meeting because council members did not discuss council business with each other or lay the groundwork for council decisions; rather, councillors used the opportunity to direct their comments about community needs and opportunities to the Prime Minister.

Good to KNOW

Our OMLET reports are in the process of being published on CanLII, the free online database of case law and legal documents created by the Canadian Legal Information Institute. All can still be found on our website.

"I take [Ombudsman Dubé's] findings very seriously. There's no question that – when there is a complaint and it is upheld – we have to sharpen up. We need to do better and we shall. We will learn from this. I take to heart what our Ombudsman says. It's just about tightening our procedures up a bit."

Norfolk County Mayor Charlie Luke, quoted in Simcoe Reformer, *May 27, 2016*



ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Overview and trends in cases

Our complaint total in this area has changed dramatically in the past year, as the Ombudsman no longer has oversight of the province's utility company, Hydro One – which accounted for **3,499** cases in 2014-2015 and **6,966** the previous year (these complaints prompted our systemic investigation into billing and customer service issues at Hydro One, and our 2015 report, *In the Dark*).

Hydro One was removed from the scrutiny of the Ombudsman, Auditor General and all other officers of the Legislature due to the partial privatization measures enacted in the province's spring 2015 budget. We received **632** complaints about Hydro One in fiscal 2015-2016. We could not take new complaints after the budget was passed on June 4, 2015, but were able to resolve all outstanding ones within the next six months. Hydro One now has its own internal ombudsman office, which opened in March 2016.

However, shortly after losing oversight of Hydro One, our Office gained oversight of most municipal energy companies and utilities – as part of the expansion of the Ombudsman's mandate to all municipalities as of January 1, 2016. Summaries of these cases can be found in the "Municipalities" section of this report.

We also received complaints about several of the ministries and programs related to environment, resources and climate change issues.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – aggregate licensing

For the past few years, our Office has monitored the response by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to our formal investigation of a complaint of unfairness in its licensing policies for producers of aggregates (gravel, sand, clay, earth, stone, or a combination thereof), which vary in certain areas of the province. The Ministry completed consultations on this matter last year and filed regulatory changes effective January 1, 2016 that resolved the inequity that prompted the original complaint.

Investigations

Systemic investigation: Hydro One billing and customer service

Report: *In the Dark*, released May 2015

Investigation update: This investigation involved the highest number of complaints about a single organization in our Office's history – **10,565** – and extraordinary efforts to triage these complaints, both within our Office and on the part of Hydro One.

Of the **66** recommendations in the report, 65 were aimed at Hydro One to improve its billing and customer service processes in the wake of the implementation of a new billing system in 2013. These included better training

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. **632** Hydro One (no longer in our jurisdiction)
2. **78** Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
3. **74** Ontario Energy Board
4. **64** Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
5. **14** Independent Electricity System Operator

> I am so thankful to you for the continual push and reminder to the government of ... their duty to support the most vulnerable of society. I hope you don't mind me telling all my friends about the good work your office is doing.
>
> *Email to Ombudsman staff from complainant*

and monitoring, more transparent communication with customers and a transformation of corporate culture. All were accepted by Hydro One.

In November 2015, six months after our report was issued, Hydro One reported back to us, as promised, that it had "fully addressed" all our recommendations, and that it had restored "customer satisfaction" to 85%. Among other things, it set targets for billing accuracy and timeliness, improved its complaint resolution system, established an independent audit committee, and pledged to report publicly on its performance measurement metrics. (We were not able to independently verify these claims or assess their impact, since our jurisdiction over Hydro One ended on June 4, 2015.)

One recommendation was made to the government of Ontario – that it maintain the Ombudsman's independent scrutiny of Hydro One. This was not accepted, but the company did establish its own internal ombudsman, and we now refer Hydro One complaints to that office. In June 2016, our Office also provided an investigative training session for the Hydro One Ombudsman and staff.

Good to KNOW

Hydro One is no longer in our jurisdiction, but:

- It now has an internal ombudsman
- We now oversee most municipal utilities

> In November 2015, six months after our report was issued, Hydro One reported back to us, as promised, that it had "fully addressed" all our recommendations, and that it had restored "customer satisfaction" to 85%.

EMPLOYMENT

Overview and trends in cases

Our office oversees the Ministry of Labour and its various programs, agencies and tribunals, including Ontario Labour Relations Board, the Employment Practices Branch, and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), which is consistently a top source of complaints to our office.

In 2015-2016, we received **594** complaints about the WSIB; more than the 481 we received the previous year, but consistent with the previous three years (552 in 2013-2014; 609 in 2012-2013; 582 in 2011-2012).

Complaints about the WSIB generally involve issues with individual compensation claims, such as delays and problems with communication or other customer service concerns, or disputes about whether someone is entitled to compensation, and how much. Our Office has helped individuals with these issues through informal intervention with WSIB officials.

In addition to these types of cases, we received an influx of complaints related to the specific issue of how the WSIB deals with medical advice. We have also received an increasing number of complaints about the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal (WSIAT) – **128** this past fiscal year, up from 99 in fiscal 2014-2015 and 95 the previous year. Many of these complaints involve significant delays.

The Special Ombudsman Response Team was assigned to assess both of these issues to determine whether a systemic investigation is warranted.

Clothing allowance for injured workers using back braces

Another issue we reviewed related to a WSIB decision to provide only a partial clothing allowance to workers who used soft back braces between 1996 and 2006. Before and after this period, injured workers wearing such braces have qualified for a full clothing allowance to compensate for damage caused to their clothing by the braces. In 2014, several workers successfully appealed the 1996-2006 limit on their clothing allowance to the WSIAT.

However, the WSIAT decision did not apply beyond the individuals who had appealed; other workers who used braces during that time were forced to engage in their own lengthy appeals. Our Office raised this matter with the WSIB and pointed out that it was unfair.

As a result, the WSIB agreed to create an expedited review process for workers who believed they were not fully compensated for clothing damage from 1996-2006. At the time this report was finalized, the WSIB was reviewing strategies for notifying workers of this new process. We continue to monitor the situation.

Investigations

Systemic issue assessment: Medical advice to WSIB

Launched: November 2015

In November 2015, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) released a report entitled *Prescription Over-Ruled*, asserting the WSIB was not dealing fairly with injured workers' medical information. The report alleged the Board was:

TOP CASE TOPICS

594
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

128 Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal

WSIB CASES IN RECENT YEARS

582
2011-2012

609
2012-2013

552
2013-2014

481
2014-2015

- Failing to heed medical advice on injured workers' readiness to return to work and not allowing sufficient treatment;
- Blaming pre-existing conditions for ongoing illness, and/or
- Using independent medical reviews which proclaim injured workers to be healed, despite the evidence of their treating practitioners.

The report made several recommendations to the WSIB and government, including that the Ombudsman undertake a systemic investigation to determine the extent of the problem. We also received a similar request from a Member of Provincial Parliament, asking the Ombudsman to look into the matter.

The Special Ombudsman Response Team was assigned to conduct an assessment to determine whether or not a systemic investigation was warranted. In late January 2016, the OFL also submitted additional information to our Office to support its request for a systemic investigation.

Our investigators spoke with stakeholders, including the WSIB, the Fair Practices Commission (which is the WSIB's internal ombudsman), and the Office of the Worker Advisor, as well as to complainants and health care professionals involved in the treatment of WSIB claimants. The Ombudsman has met a number of times with the President and Chief Executive Officer of the WSIB, as well as senior representatives of the OFL and other groups representing injured workers.

The WSIB undertook a review of its use of third-party medical consultants and reported in June 2016 that it concluded there has been no systemic disregard for the opinions of workers' medical professionals. The OFL vehemently disagreed with this position. Our Office followed up with both parties and other stakeholders. At the time this report was finalized, the WSIB and OFL were discussing potential solutions and our assessment was ongoing.

Systemic issue assessment: WSIAT backlog of appeals

Launched: April 2015

An independent agency of the Ministry of Labour, the WSIAT is an administrative tribunal that serves as the last avenue of appeal for injured workers seeking financial compensation for a condition that arose from a workplace injury. As complaints to our Office about the WSIAT have increased in recent years, a notable trend has been complaints about inordinate delays.

Special Ombudsman Response Team investigators have assessed various factors that may have contributed to this, including service changes made by WSIB, resources for the WSIAT and the appointment process for its vice-chairs. The WSIAT's normal workload of approximately 4,000 active appeals has grown to more than 9,000, leaving some appellants waiting for more than two years for their appeal to be heard – and often facing further delays in obtaining a decision thereafter.

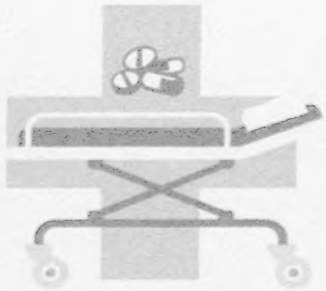
At the time this report was finalized, this assessment was ongoing.

Case summaries

Unfinished business

A man complained to our Office about the WSIB after he had not received an update on his compensation application for almost a year. When we contacted WSIB officials, they acknowledged that a decision letter prepared for the man eight months earlier had never been finalized. As a result of our inquiries, the WSIB issued the letter, and the worker was able to appeal its decision.

> "In 2015-2016, we received 593 complaints about the WSIB; more than the 481 we received the previous year, but consistent with the previous three years."



HEALTH

Overview and trends in cases

Our Office has always had oversight of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, but this has never included hospitals and long-term care homes, despite successive ombudsmen having argued for the need for independent scrutiny of these institutions since 1975. Still, we have consistently received hundreds of complaints every year about hospitals and long-term care homes (**3,757** between 2005 and 2015), and we have done our best to refer those people to help.

In fiscal 2015-2016, we received **515** complaints about hospitals and **68** about long-term care homes, which we also referred accordingly.

As of July 1, 2016, Ontario's first Patient Ombudsman office is now operational, established under the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*. Patient Ombudsman Christine Elliott oversees hospitals and long-term care homes, as well as Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), and will report on them within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, through Health Quality Ontario. As our Office oversees the Ministry, we also oversee the Patient Ombudsman.

We received **670** complaints about Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care organizations and programs within our jurisdiction in 2015-2016, with the most common topics being CCACs (**159** cases), the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (**144**) and various drug funding programs. We also received **28** complaints about Local Health Integration Networks. With the exception of CCACs, these bodies all remain within our Office's jurisdiction.

Drug programs

Most of the **68** complaints we received about the province's drug programs involved decisions to deny funding for a drug, or customer service issues. Our staff were able to resolve many cases by working with patients, physicians and Ministry officials.

For example, we found a physician's request to fund a gel form of estrogen for a patient transitioning from male to female was denied based on research data from 1998. After we facilitated communication between the physician and the Ministry, the patient received temporary funding for the drug, pending the Ministry's further research on the matter.

In some of the **25** complaints we reviewed involving the Exceptional Access Program, we raised concerns about whether it is truly addressing exceptional cases, where patients' circumstances may not satisfy its rigid eligibility criteria. The Ministry is actively reviewing its practices for people in special circumstances.

We also received **18** complaints about the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, half of which were from seniors upset about the increase in deductibles for some income brackets.

TOP 5 CASE TOPICS

1. **515** Hospitals (outside our jurisdiction)
2. **159** Community Care Access Centres (no longer in our jurisdiction)
3. **144** Ontario Health Insurance Plan
4. **68** Drug programs
5. **68** Long-term care homes (outside our jurisdiction)

Investigations

Systemic investigation: Screening of newborn babies

Report: *The Right to be Impatient*, released September 2005

Investigation update: Our 2005 investigation revealed serious problems with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's administration of the program that screens babies – through a blood test at birth – for genetic disorders in order to prevent or treat serious health problems. The program was then screening for only **2** disorders, even though most jurisdictions in the world were testing for dozens more. An estimated **50** newborns per year were dying or becoming severely disabled from conditions that could be detected by screening.

Good to KNOW

Although hospitals and long-term care homes remain outside of our jurisdiction, as of July 1, 2016, there is now a Patient Ombudsman who oversees these bodies – as well as Community Care Access Centres – within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The government took immediate action to expand the number of genetic screening tests. As of last year, Newborn Screening Ontario (NSO), based at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, was co-ordinating testing for **29** disorders.

We continue to follow up on the program, and conducted a comprehensive review of NSO policies and processes in the wake of news reports in April 2015 about delays in the transportation of blood samples placing babies at risk – particularly over holiday weekends.

We made informal inquiries with the Ministry and the NSO and received excellent co-operation from both. We were told the NSO had developed an audit tool to track blood sample transportation times. In October 2015, it established testing on Saturdays in cases where an initial test indicates the baby might have an aggressive genetic disease. Screening time for newborn blood samples meeting specific criteria will be improved by 48 hours.

In March 2016, the Ministry advised us it had approved funding to provide extended NSO lab operations and courier services on weekends. The NSO will have full Saturday operations, plus testing on Sundays in cases potentially involving an aggressive genetic disease. The Ministry also approved funding for the screening of chronic congenital heart disease, allowing Ontario to now screen for **30** disorders.

Systemic investigation: Non-emergency medical transfer services

Completed May 2011 – no report issued

Investigation update: Preliminary findings from our investigation into non-emergency transportation services (private firms whose vehicles may resemble ambulances, but are used for transporting non-urgent patients between appointments or facilities) were shared with the ministries of Transportation and Health and Long-Term Care in May 2011.

Responding to revelations of poorly maintained vehicles, untrained staff, and lack of appropriate equipment and infection control, the respective ministers announced that legislation would be introduced to regulate non-emergency transportation services. With the matter apparently resolved, no formal report was tabled.

More than five years later, the *Highway Traffic Act* has been amended so that what are now known as "stretcher transportation services" will fall under the commercial vehicle operator's registration system. The Ministry of Transportation has advised our Office that regulations for specific safety measures are still in progress. It anticipates conducting stakeholder consultations in 2016-2017, with the first phase of regulation to be implemented no earlier than 2018.

Our Office continues to monitor progress on this matter, and the Ombudsman has the option to reopen the investigation and/or issue a formal report.

Case summaries

Timely medicine

A mother whose son has a developmental disability and is medically fragile complained that her son's medication costs were no longer being covered since he had been placed in a group home funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Her son's physician's application to the Exceptional Access Program in the

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was initially denied. Our staff facilitated communication between the ministries, prompting the drug program officials to contact the physician directly and do more research; as a result, funding for the medication was approved.

Finding compassion

A woman complained to our Office on behalf of her 34-year-old daughter, who requires a specially-made drug at a cost of $200 per month. The drug is not covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program and her cardiologist's request under the Exceptional Access Program was denied. After our Office intervened, Ministry officials advised that the drug could be funded through its Compassionate Review Policy process, and the application was approved.

Retroactive relief

After the Trillium Drug Program denied a woman drug benefits that she had previously received, our staff raised the case with a senior analyst at the Ministry, who found the information she had submitted about her private insurer's drug coverage had been inconsistent. The analyst worked with the insurer and her pharmacy and reviewed her file back to 2012. She was reimbursed **$1,200** and steps were taken to have her future drug costs covered.

Fire protection

A man whose home and important documents were destroyed by fire complained that he was having trouble renewing his Ontario health card. He had been given a temporary card, but it was due to expire soon, and he needed a quick resolution because he suffers from seizures and requires frequent medical attention. After our staff spoke with Ministry officials, they agreed to extend the man's temporary health card for another year.

Welcome home

A senior contacted our Office after restrictions were placed on his visits with his wife at her long-term care home, after he raised concerns with a nurse about his wife's care. Although we do not have direct jurisdiction over long-term care homes, Ombudsman staff made inquiries with a manager at a regional office of the Ministry's Performance Improvement and Compliance Branch, which sparked a surprise inspection at the home. The home agreed to review the man's visit restriction and made changes to the care his wife was receiving.

> "Thank you for all the help that you have provided to me. Not only did you get things moving in the right direction, you made me feel that you really cared about my case and the circumstances. You are not only very good at your job, you are just lovely to deal with. I have never dealt with someone from the government (please, no disrespect intended) as personable, caring, and efficient as you."

Email to Ombudsman staff from complainant

TRANSPORTATION

Overview and trends in cases

We received **582** complaints about the Ministry of Transportation in fiscal 2015-2016. As in previous years, the most common complaints were about customer service issues relating to driver licensing, as well as disputes over driver licence suspensions, fines and fees. Our Office meets regularly with Ministry officials to discuss and resolve individual and potential systemic issues.

In addition to driver licensing and vehicle registration, the Ministry also oversees GO Transit and Metrolinx, the provincial agency mandated to manage and integrate the transportation network in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area; we received a total of **18** complaints about these agencies.

Driver Licensing – Medical Review Section

We received a significant number of complaints (**242**) about the Ministry's Medical Review Section, which is responsible for suspending drivers who are medically unfit to drive. These complaints commonly involve bureaucratic delays and communication problems related to drivers seeking to have their licences reinstated.

We meet regularly with senior Ministry officials about the steps it has initiated to improve the overall efficiency of the Medical Review Section. In particular, the Assistant Deputy Minister has taken a proacrtive, hands-on approach to the issues raised, with encouraging results.

Correspondence issues

While reviewing the complaint of a driver who had not received notice of his licence suspension, we discovered a serious concern about how the Ministry's Medical Review Section tracks correspondence. The Ministry had mistakenly sent the man's suspension notice to his street address, which has no mail delivery, instead of his mailing address, which was on his file. The notice had been returned, undelivered, but the Medical Review Section was not aware of this, as it does not track returned mail.

Ombudsman staff raised concerns about the potential impact of such notices being returned undelivered, unbeknownst to either the drivers or the Ministry. We are monitoring the Ministry's response to the issue, which so far has been proactive and co-operative.

Communication issues

Inquiries by our staff also helped prompt the Ministry to improve and clarify its public communications. For example, drivers whose vehicle licence plates have a manufacturing defect that causes them to peel and bubble can have them replaced free of charge through ServiceOntario. But when one driver discovered he had to pay a $40 replacement fee for his plate because it was more than five years old, he complained to us that this time limit had never been communicated to the public. We pointed this out to the Ministry, and ServiceOntario changed its website to clarify that it will cover

TOP CASE TOPICS

242 Driver licensing – medical review section

212 Driver licensing (other issues)

the replacement cost of plates that peel or bubble within five years of being issued.

In another case, a man contacted our Office after racking up hundreds of dollars in extra charges using the Presto card payment system on GO Transit. The system requires GO train riders to "tap" card readers at the beginning and end of their journey to calculate their fare. The man had failed to "tap off" at the end of his trips, meaning he was charged for travelling the full length of the line each time. After our Office contacted GO Transit, it improved the messages on its website and brochures to clarify how fares are calculated and the importance of "tapping off."

"Ghost" licences

Our Office has continued to monitor the issue of "master licence" records, first highlighted in our 2011-2012 Annual Report. So-called "master" records are created in the Ministry's database to store information about drivers who do not have Ontario licences, or whose existing licence temporarily cannot be found in the system. If the existing licence record is found, the duplicate record is supposed to be eliminated; however, if there is a minor variation in spelling or other data, a person can end up with more than one record in the system.

Our office uncovered a potential public safety issue with these duplicate or "ghost" licences when we dealt with a case of a convicted drunk driver who was able to retain his driver's licence for seven years, because his drunk driving conviction and licence suspension had been added instead to a "master" record that contained a misspelling of his last name.

Over the past few years, the Ministry has identified **558** duplicate "master" records and ensured that any belonging to suspended drivers who posed a risk no longer have valid licences. Its long-term plan is to transition to a new licensing system that will be able to identify and merge duplicate master records that are created in error.

Senior driver's licence renewal delays

Drivers over the age of 80 are required to complete a group education session every two years in order to renew their licences. In the summer of 2016, we received more than **25** complaints, including one from an MPP on behalf of numerous constituents, about problems in registering for these sessions. (These complaints are not counted in the 2015-2016 fiscal year statistics, as they were received after March 31, 2016.)

The only way to register for these sessions is by phone. Some seniors told us they were unable to get an answer, others spent over an hour on hold, and some who were able to book appointments said they were abruptly cancelled by the Ministry. One man drove 30 kilometres to his scheduled appointment, only to find a sign on the door indicating that the testing centre was closed. Several seniors complained they were forced to get temporary driver's licenses because there were no available appointment dates before their licenses were set to expire.

The Ministry confirmed a spike in calls about this issue in July 2016 and indicated it was looking into ways to modernize its system to better meet the needs of seniors. Ombudsman staff are following up on individual complaints and will monitor the steps taken to address the problem.

Investigations

Systemic investigation: Monitoring of drivers with uncontrolled hypoglycemia

Report: *Better Safe Than Sorry*, released April 2014

Investigation update: The **19** recommendations in this report addressed gaps in the Ministry of Transportation's system for monitoring and reporting drivers with potentially dangerous medical conditions. It reviewed a case in which a driver with uncontrolled hypoglycemia was responsible for an accident that killed three people and was convicted of dangerous driving causing death, but the Ministry did not suspend his licence until 18 months after the crash.

Our Office's recommendations focused on improving staff training and medical forms to elicit more detailed information from drivers and physicians, and increasing education and outreach for drivers with diabetes and other conditions.

The Ministry initially accepted all of the Ombudsman's recommendations, but in fall 2015 it advised us that it had changed its position on one, which called for a procedure to allow members of the public to report potentially unsafe drivers (as we reported, three other provinces have a system to consider such reports from citizens).

Ministry officials said their research determined this could lead to stressful and unnecessary interactions between members of the public and Ministry staff. In their view, the existing avenues, which allow only physicians and police to report concerns about potentially unsafe drivers, are adequate. At the time this report was finalized, Ombudsman staff were reviewing this rationale and the Ministry's latest progress report.

For the purposes of this report, cases about driver's licences are counted in the Transportation chapter, and health cards in the Health chapter, while cases about other documents handled by ServiceOntario are counted in the Certificates & Permits chapter.

Systemic investigation assessment: GO Transit platform safety

Conducted: May 2015

On April 28, 2015, a man was killed when his backpack was caught on a GO train as it was pulling out of Union Station in Toronto during the evening rush hour. This raised concerns about potential deficiencies in GO Transit's platform safety and crowd management measures, and on the Ombudsman's initiative, our Office conducted an assessment to determine whether a systemic investigation was warranted.

The Special Ombudsman Response Team made informal inquiries with GO Transit, police and the coroner to obtain information on the investigations that were carried out in this case. GO Transit did an internal review and also commissioned a review by the American Public Transportation Association of the safety systems at the station, on which it based an action plan for improvements. These included "no standing zones" where there is less than 50 inches of platform space, increased platform safety messaging, and increased staff on platforms.

One area identified for further study was the feasibility of installing platform edge barriers in all areas where there is less than 50 inches of platform space. GO Transit asked a safety firm to complete a risk assessment on this, and its report was recently provided to Metrolinx. Although the Ombudsman has not launched a formal investigation of this matter, we continue to follow up with GO Transit for updates on the implementation of its action plan.

Case summaries

Bureaucratic brake

A senior complained that after he sent a medical report to the Ministry as required for his driver's licence, he was told it could not be found and he would have to submit it again. In the interim, they suspended his licence, saying it would take four weeks for the form to be processed. Ombudsman staff pointed out to the Ministry that the man did not have access to public transit and needed his licence to get groceries and medications. Given the impact on the man, the Ministry agreed to review his medical report immediately, and his licence was reinstated the next day.

System error

After a 30-day suspension, a woman visited a ServiceOntario office and paid the $150 fee to have her licence reinstated. She received her permanent licence in the mail, but when she was involved in an accident a few months later, she was told her licence was not valid, costing her a **$325** fine. Our staff determined that the Ministry had issued her licence even though she had not completed all the requirements set out in its reinstatement form. As a result, the Ministry updated its computer system to ensure licences are not issued to drivers who have not completed all their reinstatement requirements.

Signal co-ordination

After narrowly escaping being hit by an Ontario Northland Railway train near her home, a woman requested an automatic signal be installed to prevent future incidents. The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission agreed to install a signal if the municipality bore the cost, but the municipality disputed this. Our inquiries determined that ownership of the crossing had been in dispute for 50 years. After discussions with our Office, the commission and municipality offered to share the cost of the signal, and it was installed.

MONEY & PROPERTY

Overview and trends in cases

Cases in this category relate to a few different ministries, but chiefly the Ministry of Finance (**228** complaints in total), which is responsible for a wide variety of agencies and programs, from the Financial Services Commission to the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. It includes Crown corporations such as the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, both of which were the subject of systemic investigations by our Office 10 years ago, and which we continue to monitor.

We have also counted the Landlord and Tenant Board in this area (an administrative tribunal which received **131** complaints in 2015-2016) as well as the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (**158** complaints), which manages the financial affairs of people who do not have the mental capacity to do so themselves; both of these are within the purview of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)

MPAC issues assessment notices to property owners across the province every four years. The last assessment year was 2012, and we received **108** complaints about MPAC in 2012-2013 – a significant improvement from the nearly 4,000 complaints we received prior to the release of our 2006 investigative report on MPAC, *Getting it Right*, which resulted in a two-year freeze on assessments and an overhaul of MPAC's systems.

Since 2016 is also an assessment year, the Ombudsman and senior staff met with top management at MPAC in April to review their plans for the upcoming assessment rollout and their recent efforts to make information available to property owners. At the time this report was finalized, we had seen no significant increase in complaints.

We received **47** MPAC-related complaints between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, a decrease from 76 the previous fiscal year. Most (32) involved disagreement with MPAC's decisions on property valuation; 11 related to administrative or communication problems.

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT)

Because it handles money and property matters for a vulnerable population – people who are mentally incapable – and because it has consistently been among the top 10 sources of complaints to our office, we have closely monitored issues with the OPGT in recent years. Complaints increased slightly in 2015-2016, to **158** (from 142 the previous year). As before, complaints were primarily about poor customer service and communication, and decisions made by OPGT as financial guardian.

For example, in one case, we discovered that the OPGT had failed to pay fees on a client's behalf to his mother's long-term care home, since it wrongly relied on the client, who was unable manage his own affairs, to provide documentation for his mother's expenses. In another, we pursued

TOP CASE TOPICS

228
Ministry of Finance

158
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

131
Landlord and Tenant Board

▲ April 9, 2016: Ombudsman Paul Dubé and senior staff meet with top officials from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to discuss its latest rollout of assessments.

a man's complaint about the OPGT withdrawing **$700** from his account for legal fees, and had the money reimbursed to him.

We continue to meet with senior OPGT staff regularly to discuss systemic issues and individual cases. The OPGT is taking steps to improve customer service, such as having its legal staff review every new file within the first 90 days, scanning all incoming documents so managers will have easier access to files, and engaging in outreach with government agencies and other jurisdictions to build relationships and knowledge.

Case summaries

Costly mistakes

After members of her family complained to our Office, we discovered the OPGT had made numerous errors in managing a woman's affairs – failing to pay her mortgage and utilities for several months. It also neglected to send information about the woman's finances to the Ontario Disability Support Program, resulting in her missing out on support benefits and drug coverage for two months. As a result of our inquiries, the OPGT reimbursed the woman the **$1,700** she had lost due to its errors and delays.

Sorry situation

A man with a visual impairment complained to our Office that an LCBO cashier would not sell him wine unless his 19-year-old son, who was not making a purchase but only accompanying him to provide assistance, showed identification. The man had complained to the LCBO but was unsatisfied with its reply. In response to our inquiries, the LCBO sent him a written apology, outlining the steps it would take to improve customer service in light of his experience.

CERTIFICATES & PERMITS

Overview and trends in cases

From birth certificates to death certificates, bureaucratic paperwork is a fact of life. Our Office helps Ontarians when they encounter problems in obtaining such documents – generally by working with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, which includes the Registrar General and ServiceOntario.

We received **265** complaints about a variety of Ministry programs, but most (**135**) related to ServiceOntario, which handles frontline services for the public to obtain various types of identification and official documents. ServiceOntario complaints tend to be about customer service, delays and communications issues.

Private document services – buyer beware

We also flagged a concern to ServiceOntario when we encountered a few complaints from people who had used a private company's website to order documents issued by ServiceOntario (e.g., in one case, a birth certificate; in another, a driver licence abstract). The customers complained to our Office that they initially believed the website was operated by the province, however, the private company's fees and delivery time turned out to far exceed those of ServiceOntario.

In response to our inquiries, the Ministry advised us that it could not legally prevent the private companies from operating, but it committed to developing a public awareness campaign to let citizens know these documents can be ordered directly from ServiceOntario – making the cost and delivery times clear – and how to be sure they are using an official government site (e.g., look for the Ontario logo).

Case summaries

New identity

After living on the streets for many years, a man sought our help in obtaining valid identification so he could apply for full-time work. His application for a new birth certificate was denied because he had provided incorrect information about his mother. Our staff explored other options for the man with the office of the Registrar General, and his application was approved after he was able to provide the names and birthdates of his siblings and his daughter. The man acquired a birth certificate and health card and is now employed and doing well.

Special(ist) case

A transgender man complained to our Office because he was having difficulty obtaining an updated birth certificate from the Registrar General. Individuals can change the gender designation on their birth certificate if they submit certain documentation, including a letter from a physician. The man had done so, but was refused because the letter was from his psychiatrist. Our staff confirmed the psychiatrist's qualifications, including that he was a member in good standing of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, and raised the case with senior management at ServiceOntario and the Registrar General. As a result, the Deputy Registrar General apologized to the man, and he received his new birth certificate. Management in both offices also provided their staff with a reference sheet clarifying that medical specialists can provide letters in such cases.

Guard let down

A man who needed to renew his Ontario Security Guard licence for work contacted our Office for help in speeding up the process with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. He had been waiting for three months and his existing licence had expired, which threatened to affect his job. Ombudsman staff discovered the application he submitted through ServiceOntario had gone to the Ministry, but wasn't processed due to human error. The man received his licence and the Ministry confirmed it was an isolated incident, not a problem with its systems.

TOP CASE TOPICS

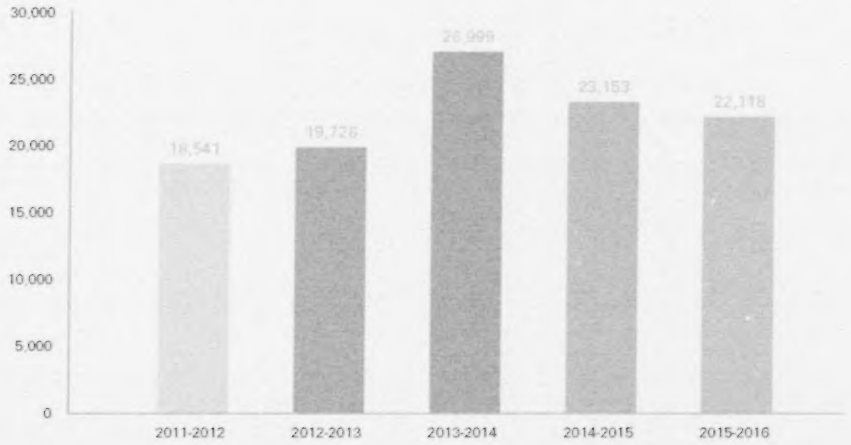
135
ServiceOntario

67
Registrar General

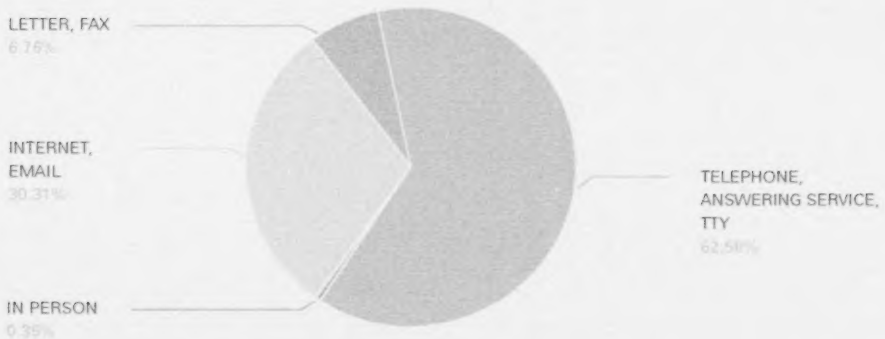
Appendix

CASE STATISTICS

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED, FISCAL YEARS 2011-2012 TO 2015-2016



HOW CASES WERE RECEIVED, 2015-2016



22,118
cases received
in fiscal 2015-2016

CASES CLOSED

12,274 cases
within the Ombudsman's authority

- INQUIRIES MADE OR REFERRAL GIVEN 47%
- CLOSED AFTER OMBUDSMAN REVIEW 19%
- RESOLVED WITH OMBUDSMAN INTERVENTION 13%
- DISCONTINUED BY COMPLAINANT 14.5%
- RESOLVED WITHOUT OMBUDSMAN INTERVENTION 6.5%

864
information submissions

9,167 cases
outside the Ombudsman's authority

- PRIVATE SECTOR 43%
- MUS OUTSIDE AUTHORITY* 21%
- PROVINCIAL OUTSIDE AUTHORITY** 19.5%
- FEDERAL 11%
- OUTSIDE ONTARIO 0.5%

IN PROGRESS

As of March 31, 2015
2,352 cases
(added to cases received this fiscal year)

As of March 31, 2016
2,165 cases
(carried forward to next fiscal year)

*Municipal and University cases received prior to January 1, 2016. School board cases received prior to September 1, 2015, and complaints related to municipal police.
**E.g. complaints about courts, Stewardship Ontario, Tarion.

CASES BY PROVINCIAL RIDING,* 2015-2016

AJAX-PICKERING	99
ALGOMA-MANITOULIN	177
ANCASTER-DUNDAS-FLAMBOROUGH-WESTDALE	76
BARRIE	150
BEACHES-EAST YORK	154
BRAMALEA-GORE-MALTON	100
BRAMPTON-SPRINGDALE	89
BRAMPTON WEST	161
BRANT	118
BRUCE-GREY-OWEN SOUND	196
BURLINGTON	108
CAMBRIDGE	110
CARLETON-MISSISSIPPI MILLS	133
CHATHAM-KENT-ESSEX	114
DAVENPORT	93
DON VALLEY EAST	69
DON VALLEY WEST	95
DUFFERIN-CALEDON	133
DURHAM	118
EGLINTON-LAWRENCE	93
ELGIN-MIDDLESEX-LONDON	145
ESSEX	129
ETOBICOKE CENTRE	92
ETOBICOKE-LAKESHORE	155
ETOBICOKE NORTH	85
GLENGARRY-PRESCOTT-RUSSELL	135
GUELPH	93
HALDIMAND-NORFOLK	110
HALIBURTON-KAWARTHA LAKES-BROCK	210
HALTON	96
HAMILTON CENTRE	171
HAMILTON EAST-STONEY CREEK	131
HAMILTON MOUNTAIN	95
HURON-BRUCE	153
KENORA-RAINY RIVER	100
KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS	139
KITCHENER CENTRE	95
KITCHENER-CONESTOGA	77
KITCHENER-WATERLOO	89
LAMBTON-KENT-MIDDLESEX	113
LANARK-FRONTENAC-LENNOX AND ADDINGTON	215
LEEDS-GRENVILLE	193
LONDON-FANSHAWE	143
LONDON NORTH CENTRE	146
LONDON WEST	130
MARKHAM-UNIONVILLE	41
MISSISSAUGA-BRAMPTON SOUTH	86
MISSISSAUGA EAST-COOKSVILLE	94
MISSISSAUGA-ERINDALE	90
MISSISSAUGA SOUTH	84
MISSISSAUGA-STREETSVILLE	55
NEPEAN-CARLETON	99
NEWMARKET-AURORA	96
NIAGARA FALLS	177
NIAGARA WEST-GLANBROOK	120
NICKEL BELT	112
NIPISSING	158
NORTHUMBERLAND-QUINTE WEST	177
OAK RIDGES-MARKHAM	114
OAKVILLE	86
OSHAWA	207
OTTAWA CENTRE	113
OTTAWA-ORLEANS	94
OTTAWA SOUTH	77
OTTAWA-VANIER	76
OTTAWA WEST-NEPEAN	74
OXFORD	85
PARKDALE-HIGH PARK	123
PARRY SOUND-MUSKOKA	208
PERTH-WELLINGTON	83
PETERBOROUGH	118
PICKERING-SCARBOROUGH EAST	71
PRINCE EDWARD-HASTINGS	211
RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE	140
RICHMOND HILL	63
SARNIA-LAMBTON	152
SAULT STE. MARIE	147
SCARBOROUGH-AGINCOURT	47
SCARBOROUGH CENTRE	59
SCARBOROUGH-GUILDWOOD	118
SCARBOROUGH-ROUGE RIVER	47
SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST	94
SIMCOE-GREY	212
SIMCOE NORTH	186
ST. CATHARINES	114
ST. PAUL'S	103
STORMONT-DUNDAS-SOUTH GLENGARRY	128
SUDBURY	158
THORNHILL	73
THUNDER BAY-ATIKOKAN	106
THUNDER BAY-SUPERIOR NORTH	124
TIMISKAMING-COCHRANE	163
TIMMINS-JAMES BAY	109
TORONTO CENTRE	192
TORONTO-DANFORTH	74
TRINITY-SPADINA	154
VAUGHAN	104
WELLAND	134
WELLINGTON-HALTON HILLS	87
WHITBY-OSHAWA	150
WILLOWDALE	68
WINDSOR-TECUMSEH	104
WINDSOR WEST	147
YORK CENTRE	124
YORK-SIMCOE	145
YORK SOUTH-WESTON	91
YORK WEST	60

**All cases where a postal code was available, including those related to municipalities, universities and school boards, but excluding correctional facilities.*

TOP 15 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS BY CASE VOLUME, 2015-2016*

		NUMBER OF CASES
1	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE	1,025
2	ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM	843
3	HYDRO ONE**	632
4	WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD	594
5	TRANSPORTATION – MEDICAL REVIEW	242
6	DRIVER LICENSING	212
7	COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES	159
8	OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE	158
9	DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES PROGRAMS	156
10	ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	155
11	ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN	144
12	COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	137
13	PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES BRANCH	135
14	SERVICEONTARIO	135
15	LANDLORD AND TENANT BOARD	131

**Excluding correctional facilities.*
***Hydro One was removed from the Ombudsman's jurisdiction on June 4, 2015.*

TOP 10 CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES BY CASE VOLUME, 2015-2016

		NUMBER OF CASES
1	CENTRAL EAST CORRECTIONAL CENTRE	647
2	TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CENTRE	455
3	OTTAWA-CARLETON DETENTION CENTRE	394
4	CENTRAL NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTRE	370
5	MAPLEHURST CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX	267
6	HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DETENTION CENTRE	220
7	VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN	194
8	ELGIN-MIDDLESEX DETENTION CENTRE	194
9	NIAGARA DETENTION CENTRE	187
10	QUINTE DETENTION CENTRE	166

CASES RECEIVED FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND SELECTED PROGRAMS,* 2015-2016

TOTAL: 11,568

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE 2015 PAN AND PARAPAN AMERICAN GAMES		3
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES		1
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR SENIORS		1
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS		11
MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL		806
ALCOHOL AND GAMING COMMISSION OF ONTARIO	14	
ASSESSMENT REVIEW BOARD	13	
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW BOARD	18	
CHILDREN'S LAWYER	25	
CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION BOARD	34	
HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE	10	
HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL OF ONTARIO	58	
LANDLORD AND TENANT BOARD	131	
LEGAL AID CLINIC	24	
LEGAL AID ONTARIO	118	
LICENCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL	10	
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE	158	
ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD	16	
SOCIAL BENEFITS TRIBUNAL	28	
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES		97
SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS – CHILDREN	46	
YOUTH CUSTODY FACILITIES	23	
MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE		3
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES		2,105
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES PROGRAMS	156	
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE	1,025	
MINISTRY-FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER	48	
ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM	811	
ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM – DISABILITY ADJUDICATION UNIT	32	
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES		4,264
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES	4,051	
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER	13	
ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE	110	
PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BRANCH	11	
PROBATION AND PAROLE	41	
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE		7
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION		256
CHILD CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND LICENSING BRANCH	17	
PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS BRANCH	50	
MINISTRY OF ENERGY		747
HYDRO ONE	632	
INDEPENDENT ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR	14	
ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD	74	

**Total figures are reported for each provincial government ministry including agencies and programs falling within its portfolio. Each government agency or program receiving 10 or more cases is also included.*

CASES RECEIVED FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND SELECTED PROGRAMS, 2015-2016

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE		**78**
MINISTRY OF FINANCE		**228**
FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION	41	
LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO	19	
MUNICIPAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT CORPORATION	47	
ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORPORATION	54	
MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND CONSUMER SERVICES		**265**
REGISTRAR GENERAL	67	
SERVICEONTARIO	135	
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE		**670**
ASSISTIVE DEVICES/HOME OXYGEN PROGRAMS	39	
COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES	159	
HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD	13	
HEALTH SERVICES APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD	10	
LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS	28	
MINISTRY-FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER	50	
NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT	15	
ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN	144	
ONTARIO PUBLIC DRUG PROGRAMS	68	
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AND COMPLIANCE BRANCH	39	
MINISTRY OF LABOUR		**828**
EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES BRANCH	27	
OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISER	26	
ONTARIO LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD	36	
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE APPEALS TRIBUNAL	128	
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD	594	
MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING		**24**
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND FORESTRY		**64**
CROWN LAND	11	
MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND MINES		**8**
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT		**19**
MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES		**501**
COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	137	
ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES	16	
ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	155	
PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES BRANCH	135	
SECOND CAREER	28	
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION		**582**
DRIVER LICENSING	212	
METROLINX/GO TRANSIT	18	
TRANSPORTATION – MEDICAL REVIEW	242	
VEHICLE LICENSING	48	

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT SCHOOL BOARDS, SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 - MARCH 31, 2016*

TOTAL: 398

ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	ALGOMA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
	BLUEWATER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
	DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA	12
	DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST	2
	DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	15
	GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
	GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
	HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	8
	HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	6
	HASTINGS & PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5
	KEEWATIN-PATRICIA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
	LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
	LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
	LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	NEAR NORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	17
	PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	23
	RAINBOW DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
	RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
	SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	10
	SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
	THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	31
	TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	65
	TRILLIUM LAKELANDS DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
	UPPER CANADA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
	WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	8
	YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	16
	TOTAL	**269**
ENGLISH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
	BRUCE-GREY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
	DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	13
	DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	6
	HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5
	HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	LONDON DISTRICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD	3
	NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
	OTTAWA CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD	3
	SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
	ST CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
	TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	41
	WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
	YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5
	TOTAL	**98**
FRENCH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES CATHOLIQUES DU CENTRE-EST	2
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE DE DISTRICT DES GRANDES RIVIÈRES	1
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE DU NOUVEL-ONTARIO	1
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE FRANCO-NORD	1
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE DISTRICT CATHOLIQUE CENTRE-SUD	1
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE DISTRICT CATHOLIQUE DE L'EST ONTARIEN	2
	TOTAL	**8**
FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES PUBLIQUES DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO	2
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE PUBLIC DU GRAND NORD DE L'ONTARIO	2
	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE PUBLIC DU NORD-EST DE L'ONTARIO	1
	TOTAL	**5**
CASES WHERE BOARD NOT SPECIFIED		18

Note: Boards that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.
**We also received 68 cases about school boards April 1-August 31, 2015, before our jurisdiction took effect.*

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, 2015-2016

TOTAL: 137

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE	3
COLLÈGE BORÉAL	1
CAMBRIAN COLLEGE	2
CANADORE COLLEGE	2
CENTENNIAL COLLEGE	5
CONESTOGA COLLEGE	5
CONFEDERATION COLLEGE	1
DURHAM COLLEGE	8
FANSHAWE COLLEGE	10
FLEMING COLLEGE (SIR SANDFORD FLEMING COLLEGE)	4
GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE	18
GEORGIAN COLLEGE	6
HUMBER COLLEGE	9
LA CITÉ COLLÉGIALE	3
LAMBTON COLLEGE	2
LOYALIST COLLEGE	9
MOHAWK COLLEGE	6
NIAGARA COLLEGE CANADA	9
NORTHERN COLLEGE	1
SAULT COLLEGE	2
ST. CLAIR COLLEGE	4
ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE	3
SENECA COLLEGE	15
SHERIDAN COLLEGE	7
CASES WHERE COLLEGE NOT SPECIFIED	2

Note: Colleges that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT UNIVERSITIES, JANUARY 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2016*

TOTAL: 92

BROCK UNIVERSITY	1
CARLETON UNIVERSITY	2
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY	11
LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY	3
MCMASTER UNIVERSITY	3
NIPISSING UNIVERSITY	2
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY	4
RYERSON UNIVERSITY	9
TRENT UNIVERSITY	2
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH	4
UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	3
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	8
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO	7
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO	8
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR	3
WESTERN UNIVERSITY	3
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY	5
YORK UNIVERSITY	14

Note: Universities that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.
**We also received 49 cases about universities April 1-December 31, 2015, before our jurisdiction took effect.*

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNCIPALITIES, JANUARY 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2016*

TOTAL: 918

ADELAIDE METCALFE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ADJALA-TOSORONTIO, TOWNSHIP OF	8
ALFRED AND PLANTAGENET, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
AMARANTH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
AMHERSTBURG, TOWN OF	2
ARMOUR, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ARNPRIOR, TOWN OF	1
ASHFIELD-COLBORNE-WAWANOSH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ASPHODEL-NORWOOD, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ATHENS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
AURORA, TOWN OF	1
BANCROFT, TOWN OF	1
BARRIE, CITY OF	4
BAYHAM, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
BELLEVILLE, CITY OF	3
BLIND RIVER, TOWN OF	2
BONFIELD, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BRACEBRIDGE, TOWN OF	2
BRADFORD WEST GWILLIMBURY, TOWN OF	1
BRAMPTON, CITY OF	8
BRANT, COUNTY OF	1
BRANTFORD, CITY OF	8
BRIGHTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	6
BROCK, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BROCKTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
BROOKE-ALVINSTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
BRUCE, COUNTY OF	2
BURK'S FALLS, VILLAGE OF	1
BURLINGTON, CITY OF	3
CALEDON, TOWN OF	5
CALLANDER, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
CAMBRIDGE, CITY OF	12
CARLETON PLACE, TOWN OF	1
CARLOW/MAYO, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CASSELMAN, VILLAGE OF	1
CAVAN MONAGHAN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
CENTRAL FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	3
CENTRAL MANITOULIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
CENTRE WELLINGTON, TOWNSHIP OF	4
CHAMPLAIN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CHAPLEAU, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CHATHAM-KENT, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
CLARENCE-ROCKLAND, CITY OF	4
CLEARVIEW, TOWNSHIP OF	3
COBOURG, TOWN OF	2
COCHRANE, TOWN OF	1
COLLINGWOOD, TOWN OF	4
CORNWALL, CITY OF	2
CRAMAHE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
DOURO-DUMMER, TOWNSHIP OF	2
DUFFERIN, COUNTY OF	1
DURHAM, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	11
DYSART ET AL, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
EAR FALLS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
EAST GWILLIMBURY, TOWN OF	4
ELLIOT LAKE, CITY OF	2
ERIN, TOWN OF	3
ESPANOLA, TOWN OF	1
ESSA, TOWNSHIP OF	4
ESSEX, TOWN OF	2
FORT ERIE, TOWN OF	1
FORT FRANCES, TOWN OF	1
FRENCH RIVER, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
GANANOQUE, SEPARATED TOWN OF	2
GEORGIAN BAY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
GEORGINA, TOWN OF	1
GRAND VALLEY, TOWN OF	1
GRAVENHURST, TOWN OF	1
GREATER NAPANEE, TOWN OF	2
GREATER SUDBURY, CITY OF	16
GREY HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
GREY, COUNTY OF	3
GRIMSBY, TOWN OF	1
GUELPH, CITY OF	6
GUELPH/ERAMOSA, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HALDIMAND COUNTY, COUNTY OF	2
HALTON HILLS, TOWN OF	2
HALTON, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	3
HAMILTON, CITY OF	30
HASTINGS HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
HASTINGS, COUNTY OF	2
HEARST, TOWN OF	1
HIGHLANDS EAST, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
HORNEPAYNE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HURON, COUNTY OF	3
INGERSOLL, TOWN OF	1
INNISFIL, TOWN OF	2
IROQUOIS FALLS, TOWN OF	3
JOCELYN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
JOHNSON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
JOLY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
KAPUSKASING, TOWN OF	1
KAWARTHA LAKES, CITY OF	9
KENORA, CITY OF	2
KINGSTON, CITY OF	16
KINGSVILLE, TOWN OF	1
KITCHENER, CITY OF	5
LAKE OF BAYS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
LAKESHORE, TOWN OF	1
LAMBTON, COUNTY OF	4
LANARK, COUNTY OF	1
LARDER LAKE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
LATCHFORD, TOWN OF	2
LEAMINGTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
LEEDS AND GRENVILLE, UNITED COUNTIES OF	2
LENNOX & ADDINGTON, COUNTY OF	1
LINCOLN, TOWN OF	3
LONDON, CITY OF	23
LOYALIST TOWNSHIP	2
LUCAN BIDDULPH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MADOC, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MAGNETAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
MALAHIDE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MANITOUWADGE, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MARKHAM, CITY OF	2
MATTAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MCDOUGALL, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MCGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MCKELLAR, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MCMURRICH/MONTEITH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MCNAB/BRAESIDE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MEAFORD, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
MELANCTHON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD, VILLAGE OF	1
MIDDLESEX CENTRE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MIDDLESEX, COUNTY OF	2
MIDLAND, TOWN OF	2

Note: Municipalities that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.
**We also received 1,492 cases about municipalities April 1-December 31, 2015, before our jurisdiction took effect.*

MILTON, TOWN OF	6
MINDEN HILLS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MISSISSAUGA, CITY OF	12
MONO, TOWN OF	3
MONTAGUE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MORRIS-TURNBERRY, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
MUSKOKA LAKES, TOWNSHIP OF	74
MUSKOKA, DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY OF	2
NAIRN AND HYMAN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NEEBING, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
NEWMARKET, TOWN OF	4
NIAGARA FALLS, CITY OF	4
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, TOWN OF	2
NIAGARA, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	9
NORFOLK, COUNTY	9
NORTH ALGONA WILBERFORCE , TOWNSHIP OF	5
NORTH BAY, CITY OF	8
NORTH GLENGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORTH HURON, TOWNSHIP OF	17
NORTH KAWARTHA, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORTH STORMONT, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORTHEASTERN MANITOULIN AND THE ISLANDS, TOWN OF	1
OAKVILLE, TOWN OF	2
ORANGEVILLE, TOWN OF	3
ORILLIA, CITY OF	4
ORO-MEDONTE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
OSHAWA, CITY OF	12
OTTAWA, CITY OF	52
OWEN SOUND, CITY OF	3
OXFORD, COUNTY OF	3
PARRY SOUND, TOWN OF	1
PEEL, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	17
PELHAM, TOWN OF	2
PERTH EAST, TOWNSHIP OF	1
PERTH, COUNTY OF	1
PERTH, TOWN OF	1
PETAWAWA, TOWN OF	1
PETERBOROUGH, CITY OF	2
PETROLIA, TOWN OF	1
PORT HOPE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
PRINCE EDWARD, COUNTY OF	1
PUSLINCH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
QUINTE WEST, CITY OF	1
RAINY RIVER, TOWN OF	1
RAMARA, TOWNSHIP OF	2
RED LAKE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
RED ROCK, TOWNSHIP OF	1
RICHMOND HILL, TOWN OF	4
RIDEAU LAKES, TOWNSHIP OF	3
SARNIA, CITY OF	2
SAUGEEN SHORES, TOWN OF	2
SAULT STE. MARIE, CITY OF	9
SEGUIN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SEVERN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SIMCOE, COUNTY OF	3
SIOUX LOOKOUT, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA, TOWN OF	3
SOUTH DUNDAS, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
SOUTH GLENGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	4
SOUTH STORMONT, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SOUTHGATE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SOUTHWOLD, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SPRINGWATER, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ST. CATHARINES, CITY OF	3
ST. CLAIR, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ST. THOMAS, CITY OF	2
ST.-CHARLES, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
STIRLING-RAWDON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
TAY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
TEMISKAMING SHORES, CITY OF	1
THE ARCHIPELAGO, TOWNSHIP OF	1
THE NORTH SHORE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
THESSALON, TOWN OF	1
THOROLD, CITY OF	2
THUNDER BAY, CITY OF	8
TIMMINS, CITY OF	9
TINY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
TORONTO, CITY OF	75
TRENT HILLS, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
TRENT LAKES, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
TYENDINAGA, TOWNSHIP OF	2
UXBRIDGE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
VAUGHAN, CITY OF	6
WASAGA BEACH, TOWN OF	5
WATERLOO, CITY OF	1
WATERLOO, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	7
WELLAND, CITY OF	5
WELLESLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
WELLINGTON, COUNTY OF	1
WEST ELGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
WEST GREY, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
WEST LINCOLN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
WHITBY, TOWN OF	5
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, TOWN OF	1
WHITESTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
WHITEWATER REGION, TOWNSHIP OF	5
WINDSOR, CITY OF	12
WOODSTOCK, CITY OF	1
WOOLWICH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
YORK, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	10
CASES WHERE MUNICIPALITY NOT SPECIFIED	13

SHARED LOCAL BOARDS	
ALGOMA DISTRICT SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	1
DISTRICT OF COCHRANE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	1
DISTRICT OF NIPISSING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	1
DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	1
KENORA DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	1
MANITOULIN-SUDBURY DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	2
NIAGARA CENTRAL AIRPORT COMMISSION	1
NIAGARA DISTRICT AIRPORT COMMISSION	1
THUNDER BAY SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	2
CASES WHERE BOARDS NOT SPECIFIED	2
SHARED CORPORATIONS	
COLLUS POWERSTREAM	1
CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES	7
ENERGY + INC	1
ERIE THAMES POWERLINES CORPORATION	2
KITCHENER-WILMOT HYDRO INC	1
NEWMARKET-TAY POWER DISTRIBUTION LTD	1
POWERSTREAM INC.	7

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT CLOSED MUNICIPAL MEETINGS, SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 - MARCH 31, 2016

CASES ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES WHERE OMBUDSMAN IS THE INVESTIGATOR	45
CASES ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES WHERE ANOTHER INVESTIGATOR HAS BEEN APPOINTED	25

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS

MUNICIPALITY	MEETINGS & GATHERINGS REVIEWED	PROCEDURAL VIOLATIONS FOUND	BEST PRACTICES SUGGESTED	ILLEGAL MEETINGS
AMHERSTBURG, TOWN OF	2	0	0	0
ARMOUR, TOWNSHIP OF	1	6	5	1
BONFIELD, TOWNSHIP OF	2	5	4	0
BRIGHTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	2	3	0
BURK'S FALLS, VILLAGE OF	1	6	5	1
CASSELMAN, VILLAGE OF	4	0	3	0
ELLIOT LAKE, CITY OF	4	0	1	0
ESSEX, TOWN OF	1	0	1	1
FORT ERIE, TOWN OF	1	0	4	1
LONDON, CITY OF	1	0	3	1
MCDOUGALL, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	0	0	0
MCKELLAR, TOWNSHIP OF	3	1	4	2
NIAGARA FALLS, CITY OF	1	0	1	0
NIAGARA, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	1	2	1	1
OWEN SOUND, CITY OF	3	0	0	0
PORT COLBORNE, CITY OF	3	2	1	1
RUSSELL, TOWNSHIP OF	3	1	7	2
SEGUIN TOWNSHIP	1	0	0	0
ST.-CHARLES, MUNICIPALITY OF	3	0	3	3
SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA, TOWN OF	5	1	4	0
WEST LINCOLN, TOWNSHIP OF	2	3	3	0
WHITESTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	0	0	0

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Our Office's budget was increased in 2015-2016 to **$18.58 million**, to fund an expansion of staff and operations, in recognition of the expansion of our mandate, which doubled the number of public sector bodies under our jurisdiction (from 500+ to 1,000+).

Our actual expenditures were **$13.12 million**, with new spending directed toward this ongoing expansion as well as additional outreach and space to accommodate this growth. All unspent funds were returned to the provincial treasury.

	(IN THOUSANDS)
ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES:	**13,166**
SALARIES AND WAGES:	**7,517**
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:	**1,767**
COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION:	**294**
SERVICES:	**2,026**
SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT:	**1,572**
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE (RETURNED TO GOVERNMENT):	**42**
NET EXPENDITURES:	**13,124**

We can help.

www.ombudsman.on.ca

Ombudsman
ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

@Ont_Ombudsman

Ontario Ombudsman

OntarioOmbudsman

Independent Impartial Confidential Free